

ATTEMPTED ABDUCTION — POLICE RESPONSE

324. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Police:

I refer to an article in *The West Australian* of 28 April that reported that a father and his neighbours in Warnbro foiled an attempt to abduct his little girl.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the father had to wait four hours before the police responded to his request for assistance?
- (2) Is a four-hour wait for a response to a report of a child abduction normal practice under the minister's government?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Warnbro for this question. I have received a briefing from WA Police about this matter. It has not been handled appropriately and police are certainly working on improving their processes in response to these sorts of circumstances. What actually happened in that instance was an attempted abduction of, I think, an eight-year-old girl. The abduction was foiled and police were called for assistance. My understanding is that the person who attempted to abduct the child was in the vicinity in a distressed state and being managed by people. The incident was incorrectly downgraded from a priority 3 to another category at the police assistance centre so it did not receive the right prioritisation. As a result, there was a considerable delay in police attending the scene. We are looking into that incident, which was serious. Police have contacted the people involved and apologised. Police are also interrogating the entire process to ensure that this does not occur again.