

POLICE — REFORM

808. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented support for WA's police officers and its commitment to keeping our community safe.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the measures and reforms this government has delivered this year to support our police force?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how these reforms have strengthened community safety and assisted our police in protecting the community?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his question and for his support of the police, including coming along with me recently to Cockburn Police Station to greet those officers who police his patch.

- (1)–(2) It has been a big year in continuing to provide support to the Western Australia Police Force, the likes of which have not been seen—ever. Probably the most significant contribution I would like to reflect upon is the fact that earlier in the year, we delivered something that no other government has delivered for police—something that police have wanted probably since the inception of the WA Police Force—and that was compensation for police. I remember how significant it was, Speaker, when you first invited the Medically Retired Western Australian Police Officers Association to the Western Australian Labor Party state conference before we entered government. It had had no joy anywhere in seeking support for its advocacy for some recognition and better treatment until that time. You took them to the Labor Party state conference and a motion was passed on the floor of the Labor Party state conference supporting compensation for police. This government then delivered that in recent times. It is something quite extraordinary. I am regularly signing off on recognition of police officers who, sadly, through the consequences of things they have been exposed to in their careers, have been injured and are getting compensation or applying for compensation through that scheme. It is wonderful to see.

We have also been continuing to support police conducting operations by providing them with necessary resources. Operation Regional Shield continues to be funded. It enables the Commissioner of Police to deploy police capability, individuals and assets anywhere in the regions, as required to address acute policing challenges. That continues and will continue as necessary to address issues around, particularly, juvenile offending in the regions that police confront. We continue to upgrade and equip our police force with the best equipment in the world. During Madam Speaker's recent term as Minister for Police, she delivered things such as body armour for all our police officers and body-worn cameras, which is a significant change that enables them to refute and dismiss many malicious complaints about police and enables us to assist in operations and training of police officers. The OneForce mobile phones have been an extraordinary addition, but this year we have enhanced that service through the introduction of CarPlay, which enables the OneForce mobile phone feature to be matched directly by individual's voices to every police vehicle they hop into, so that they can access data as they are approaching an incident and get situational awareness, the likes of which has never been delivered. That is an extraordinary step in improving their capabilities and safety. We have given commitments this year to upgrading our BearCat armoured vehicles, buying new jet boats for the water police and rigid-hull inflatable upgrades for our tactical response group, and, of course, committed funding for two new helicopters, which will be a significant advancement in their capabilities.

The other pretty significant thing we did was appoint a new Commissioner of Police, Col Blanch, APM, a wonderful new leader of the Western Australia Police Force. He is doing a great job and it is fantastic to have witnessed him taking office. The final thing I would observe is that we have committed to growing the police force by 950 above attrition. We continue to recruit and fund the Western Australia Police Force to get those additional numbers that we aspire to recruit. I can tell members that to date, some 1 127 people have been inducted into the WA Police Force under that program and the growth continues. Tomorrow evening, I will be attending yet another graduation; I do it almost monthly. This time silver and bronze squads will be graduating and another 43 officers will join the force. We also have in the wings some 600 or so applications from the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand. We will continue to support the Western Australia Police Force in growing to achieve that objective.