

CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — NORTHBRIDGE

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's investment in putting an additional 950 new police officers on our streets. Can the minister update the house on the work of the WA police in responding to crime and antisocial behaviour in the Northbridge entertainment precinct, and outline how this is delivering greater safety within the area?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his question and his support of the Western Australia Police Force.

I am pleased to update the house and advise that we are currently in the midst of the single-biggest recruitment of police officers in a four-year period in the history of the state. That is 950 officers in this four-year period, but, of course, when combined with the 150 or so delivered as a consequence of our promise at the 2017 election, it is 1 100 overall. In the last 18 months or so, I have been going to graduations almost monthly, and there is one tonight—red and white squads are graduating tonight. That is another 54 or so officers who will be leaving the academy and joining the Western Australia Police Force. We have graduated some 530 officers since that program commenced, but we have actually recruited around 570 through the doors, so there are still some under training. It is progressing well.

As officers go into the police force, they go out across the state. One district that is receiving additional officers is Perth district, which has been the beneficiary of an additional 175 officers over the last 18 months—an extraordinary uplift in the number of police officers on the ground. They are employed aggressively at the moment in foot patrols—a high-visibility presence on the streets—to ensure that people not only feel safe but also are safe at all times around the CBD. Anyone who walks around the city at night-time now would understand and recognise that. If someone goes into Northbridge on a Friday or Saturday night at this time of the year when Operation Nightsafe is operating, they will probably see more police than patrons at some of the venues. It is not just foot patrols. The liquor enforcement unit is actively enforcing the responsible service of alcohol at venues to ensure that we get the benefit of those laws that require venues to act responsibly.

As I have said many times in this place, right throughout the previous term of office, and currently, WA has been leading the nation, if not the world, in adopting technology to enable better, more efficient and safer policing for police officers. That is happening all over the state. In Northbridge, we are seeing the benefit of these things right now. During the last term, we saw the introduction of body armour, digital access for police officers with the OneForce mobile phones, and body-worn cameras. Across the Perth district, but particularly in Northbridge, the police are trialling the livestreaming of body-worn camera imagery to the State Operations Command Centre, so there is real-time monitoring and support to police officers on the ground right throughout Northbridge. That area is significantly safer, better supported and better policed, and it will only get better because we are going to continue.