

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

**706. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts to boost the number of police officers in Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the outcomes of the recruitment campaigns in Australia and overseas?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house on what measures are being implemented to support the overwhelming demand to join the Western Australia Police Force from both international and local applicants?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question and for his wholehearted support of the Western Australia Police Force. Unlike many other jurisdictions, Western Australia is doing incredibly well in attracting police recruits who are interested in applying to join our police force. The campaign in the United Kingdom and Ireland earlier this year was extraordinarily successful, to the extent that we had some 1 438 applicants from across the UK, Ireland and New Zealand. We have welcomed the very first squad of those officers who have been selected. We get to choose the best because we have so many applicants. Only a week or so ago I was at the academy welcoming the very first squad of transition officers. Of the 27 internationals, 23 are Brits, three are Irish officers and there are a couple of Kiwis. We also got a couple of New South Welsh officers—I will not say “men” because there were women as well—and one Western Australian returning police officer. That is the first transition squad. They are all experienced, with a minimum of three years, but many of them have done far more than that. These are experienced officers who will bolster the experience of our Western Australia Police Force. They require only half the length of training. It is transitional training. They will be finished by Christmas and out on the streets serving the Western Australian population in the new year.

At the same time, we have had incredible success in attracting good Western Australians who are stepping forward to serve in our Western Australia Police Force in, I would say, unprecedented numbers. We had something like 1 600 applicants from within the Western Australian community who wanted to join the Western Australia Police Force. That is a huge number. Coupled together, we have to do something to get them through the academy, so we have doubled the throughput. We are now training 1 000 officers over a 12-month period and putting them through at double the normal rate. The last graduation I went to had three squads. The next will probably have the same number and it will go on like that into the foreseeable future. We will continue to recruit from overseas, probably for the next five years. We have a labour agreement to take 150 a year. As I said, we are attracting many hundreds. Over time, it will be thousands. Therefore, we can select the best. That portends well for the Western Australia Police Force and the community. It also undeniably confirms that the Western Australia Police Force enjoys an incredible reputation for professionalism. Our police officers have very high morale and are well led. We have the best-resourced police force in the country, if not equal to any in the world. That is a good thing for Western Australia.