

POLICE, OPERATION ZIRCON

Mr D'ORAZIO to the Minister for Police:

Could the minister advise on the progress of Operation Zircon in dealing with organised crime?

Mrs ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. First, I congratulate all of the officers involved in Operation Zircon for the successful result in charging a suspect over the murders of Mr Don Hancock and Mr Lou Lewis. The Premier and I visited the Zircon officers yesterday at their headquarters to personally congratulate them and to give our assurances that they have the Government's fullest commitment to their ongoing work. Charging a suspect is not the end of anything; others may be charged. The process will not be complete until people have progressed through the court system. I assure the House that our Government will commit all the resources necessary in the fight against outlaw motor cycle gangs and organised crime. This commitment includes the organised crime legislation, which could have resulted in the perpetrators of this crime being brought to justice sooner by breaking the code of silence.

Over the past five months the officers of Operation Zircon have been very busy indeed, with the following successes: 31 arrests and 101 charges; over \$1.3 million worth of assets seized; over \$0.5 million in cash seized; the seizure of 3.6 kilograms of amphetamines and over 1 000 tablets of ecstasy; and the seizure of 21 illegal firearms and over 2 000 rounds of ammunition.

I congratulate the officers on their success and urge the Opposition to support the legislation that will give the police the powers they need to help us fight the scourge of organised crime and outlaw motor cycle gangs.