

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — POLICE

**357. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to the Commissioner of Police's requirement for WA police officers and staff to be vaccinated or wear a mask.

- (1) Under what powers can the WA police commissioner mandate that Western Australia Police Force employees are required to wear a face mask if they are not fully vaccinated?
- (2) Does the Premier and his government support mandatory vaccination for the WA Police Force?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry, I require only the Premier to answer the question—no-one else, thanks.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) Chris Dawson is an outstanding Western Australian police commissioner. He is highly respected across the community. Over the last 18 months, the Minister for Health and I have basically met and worked with him on a daily basis. One of his roles is State Emergency Coordinator, which means that he has authority under the Emergency Management Act to exercise powers to do and require certain things across the community. He is also the employer of police, police auxiliary staff and civilian staff in various roles. He advised us, maybe last week, in his range of roles, that if staff in those positions get sick and the facility or the activity ceases operating, it will be catastrophic for the state. I will give the Leader of the Opposition one example. The emergency call line 000 is staffed 24 hours a day. If staff members who are trained in dealing with these things get COVID and get sick, the emergency call line stops operating, or the 131 444 line stops operating. He said, "I cannot allow those people to all go out sick." He has put in place a requirement for those people, initially, to be vaccinated. There are various other functions within the police that are of similar importance in keeping the community safe and, frankly, society operating and functioning. He said, "Look, there's a requirement for them to get vaccinated or wear a mask. That's the requirement I'm going to put in place." I agree with him. It might sound harsh, it might sound difficult, but this is a time for doing difficult and tough things. He has powers under the emergency management laws and he has powers as an employer, particularly in relation to uniformed officers. There might be some complaint—I saw an article in the paper with some complaints today—but, frankly, I am on the police commissioner's side.