

POLICE - DNA TESTING

737. Mr A.J. Simpson to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

With reference to DNA testing done by and for the Western Australia Police, can the Minister advise -

- (1) What is the average time taken to conduct such tests, from the collection of the sample to the return of results?
- (2) What is the average time taken to conduct such tests, from the collection of the sample to the return of results for sexual assaults?
- (3) What is the longest time that such a test has taken?
- (4) What is the longest time that such a test has taken for cases of sexual assault?
- (5) How many such tests are pending completion at this time?
- (6) How many such tests are pending completion at this time for cases of sexual assault?
- (7) What is the most number of tests that have been pending at any one time?
- (8) What is the most number of tests that have been pending at any one time for sexual assault?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

The Western Australia Police advise:

- (1)-(8) Evidence collected in criminal cases is sent to PathWest for analysis. Items of evidence collected are categorised as "Major Crime", "Volume Crime" or "Intelligence".

WA Police sets the case priority, with the highest priority being given to homicides and sexual assaults. The priority assigned by the WA Police dictates the level of resources allocated to each case, which will affect the overall turn around time.

Major Crime cases examined by the laboratory may vary in time from receipt to completion. However, PathWest can obtain DNA results within 48 hours for the highest priority cases. Volume Crime cases may vary from the date of examination to the date a profile was available.

In 2005, the PathWest Forensic Biology laboratory received exhibits from 1,300 major crime cases and 4,900 property crime cases. In total, the laboratory received approximately 40,000 items for DNA testing.

Specific statistics relating to these questions can be obtained from PathWest which comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Health.