

OPERATION CLEARANCE, BURGLARY BLITZ

45. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Will the minister inform the House of the latest blitz on burglary across the metropolitan region?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for that very good question. I am pleased to inform the House about the great success in solving burglaries. The Police Service ran Operation Clearance last week, which involved more than 40 officers. As a result, 167 people were arrested, including 15 juveniles, on nearly 500 charges. Our Government has launched an all-out offensive against burglary with community awareness campaigns, hard-hitting police operations and successful DNA profiling. They are all reaping good rewards. Recent police statistics indicate that the number of burglaries has dropped by approximately 14 per cent. I commend all police officers involved in the antiburglary campaigns for those very pleasing results. As a result, I expect the Government will be able to erase the title earned by members opposite when they were last in government that Western Australia was the burglary capital of Australia.

In addition to \$22 million targeted for DNA profiling and the like, the Government has also injected an additional \$200 000 to assist police conduct special antiburglary operations such as Operation Clearance. Similar operations will be conducted in the near future. Operation Clearance involved detectives from metropolitan police districts who joined forces as part of a regional investigative unit. A total of 474 charges were laid, which included 169 charges of burglary; 19 charges of stealing motor vehicles; 139 charges of stealing or fraud, including eight of armed robbery; and five sexual assault charges. As part of this initiative it was discovered that during some of those burglaries, sexual assaults were made on women. The fact that the police have laid charges for five sexual assaults as a result of Operation Clearance is excellent work. In addition, in just over the past two weeks, more than \$250 000 worth of stolen goods has been recovered.

The fight against burglary is continuing. Not only is the Government providing the police with resources to get the job done but also its antiburglary strategy will include the introduction of new laws that will establish jail terms for people who use children to commit crimes, increase penalties for breaches of the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act and increase police powers to raid drug houses at which stolen property is exchanged for drugs. The Government is committed to finding new programs and new laws to fight crime and burglary.