

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Motion

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [10.13 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house notes the failure of the government to provide community safety through an adequate response to crime across the state of Western Australia and calls on the Premier and cabinet to enforce the laws of this state to provide safety and security to its people, families and businesses.

There is no doubt that the McGowan government has lost control of the law and justice issue in this state. This government has failed repeatedly. In this house we have debated a number of failures of the government over recent years, but we have tended to leave this one alone in the Legislative Council because much of the activity occurs in the Legislative Assembly, and we have tried to be positive, not negative. We are a positive opposition, but it has come to a point.

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We are optimists on this side of the chamber but we can take it no more. We can excuse this government no more. Surely a line has to be drawn in the sand about the inadequacies of this government and its inability to apply the laws of this state to maintain safety in the community. Members might think that it is just me making up these things.

Hon Kate Doust interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I missed that completely, sorry. I did not hear it. My hearing is going.

Let us have a look at some of the other contributions to this debate. It is absolutely the fact that the government likes to send out mixed messages on this. The Premier and the Minister for Police seem to be at odds, but I suspect that they are just trying to cover both ends of an argument to make the government look good without necessarily having any solutions to the problem. I will read from an editorial in *The West Australian* of Tuesday to give an indication of what the situation looks like —

They're tragically common scenarios in our country towns.

Kids behind the wheel of stolen cars, with parents nowhere to be seen. Often, these children are barely big enough to see over the steering wheel.

Business owners at the end of their tethers due to constant ram raids and break-ins.

Residents left prisoners in their own homes due to the violence and antisocial behaviour outside.

Many aren't safe at home either. Domestic violence has reached horrifying levels.

Make no mistake, many of our country towns are at breaking point.

That is hardly a ringing endorsement of the capacity of this government to provide safety and law and order around the state of Western Australia. Just before members think that everybody who is suffering at the hands of those who break the law are in regional areas, the situation is not that much better in Perth. One could easily say that this is a remote community issue, for example, and that there are many issues there, but the situation is not much better in Perth. Let me say this before we get too far into the debate: the laws currently exist. The actions of these people are illegal. These things are not to be excused; they are illegal actions. The government is simply incapable of enforcing the law. That is the position in which we find ourselves at the moment. The government will come to one or two answers on this. Either it is too complex for us to act, or it is really simple if it looks a bit populist. I will come to that in a bit more detail. But I am interested to see how the government might respond to this. It will be very interesting to see whether the government says, "Actually, there's not a problem out there." That will be the first step in the debate. Surely the government is not so ignorant as to say there is not a problem out there in relation to law and order, be it in the remote or regional areas, or metropolitan Perth. If members think that metropolitan Perth is not impacted, they should walk down the malls at about midnight or wander through Northbridge and see how safe they feel. There is an issue with people feeling safe. I know that oppositions always say that there is an issue with safety and people feel unsafe. I am sure that government members, when they were in opposition, ran around saying that people feel unsafe, because oppositions do that in a lot of cases. But right now, in this circumstance, it is absolutely valid. The government should not pretend that this is political spin or something that people say because people like to feel unsafe. It should actually recognise that there is a community legal issue that needs to be dealt with, one that this government seems to be incapable of addressing.

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What has been the response to date? The reality is that we have had two completely separate responses. The Premier is very keen. He has done some polling and held a couple of focus groups and they have told him that it is good to be tough on crime, so he is taking the tough-on-crime approach.

The evidence I submit to this is an example taken from the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of 10 February, but it ran in other newspapers. The article states —

Mark McGowan has launched a blistering critique of the parents of children permitted to roam the streets of regional towns, insisting police and government agencies were “doing their bit” and that the often dysfunctional families of the truant kids “need to step up as well”.

The Premier got some polling groups in and said, “We need to be tough on crime.” He is probably right, because people do not feel safe. People think that this government has let them down. They need to feel safe. It is a very simple trite mechanism to say, “We’ll just make parents step up” because parents will not. I understand this. This is a massive issue for the Labor Party. As I have said numerous times in this place, what is the difference between the Labor Party and the conservatives? What is the difference between the left wing and right wing? The Labor Party believes in communal reward and communal responsibility—“It’s everybody’s fault.” What do the conservatives do? They believe in individual reward and individual responsibility—“You have an individual responsibility to obey the laws of the land.”

Hon Dan Caddy interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is what being conservative means, honourable member—individual responsibility. Guess what? It looks like the Premier is trying to jump on board with us. It looks like he has done a bit of polling and listened to a focus group, saying, “That’s what people expect.” The government wants people to take individual responsibility. That is very hard in certain sections of the community, but that is what being conservative means. I understand. The Premier is trying to occupy that space that says individual responsibility matters. A lot of people would agree with him. He has polled people, the vast majority of whom have probably said, “Absolutely. Individual responsibility is critically important.”

Just before members think that this is an issue entirely focused on remote Aboriginal communities, it is not. Just before they might suggest that I do not have any experience in this area, I say to members that I grew up on the border of central and south-east Queensland, outside the town of Murgon, which has as a satellite town the Aboriginal community of Cherbourg. I was one of two non-Aboriginal people in my high school football team. My experience with Aboriginal communities in the eastern states was not insignificant. It is not just an issue of Aboriginal communities. There is an issue in those Aboriginal communities of responsibility for these actions, but it is not just there. As I have said, members should walk down Hay Street Mall and through Northbridge at one o’clock in the morning and see how safe they feel. It is not simply an issue of one section of society. Across the state of Western Australia, across all the social groupings, people do not feel safe. The government should step up. I understand why it cannot, despite the Premier saying that we should focus on individual responsibility. Can members imagine him in the cabinet room, waving around the polling, saying, “People expect us to be tough.” I would say, “Fair enough. You want to be tough.”

Hon Sue Ellery: No polling in the cabinet room.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: There is no polling in the cabinet room. He is probably doing it in the Labor Party or perhaps the caucus. We will see how we go.

The problem the Premier has is that the Minister for Police wants to jump onto the other side of the argument. It is interesting to see the Labor Party trying to take both sides of the argument and occupy that space. The Premier is saying, “We need to be tough on crime. Let’s push parents into this position. We need to make sure that they step up.” I do not disagree with him. It might surprise members of the public but members in this chamber know that I agree with the Premier on occasions, and have said so. But the reality is that the good old Minister for Police has stepped up. What does the Minister for Police believe? When there was an outbreak of violence in Carnarvon again, the shadow minister—sorry, the Minister for Police; I would like him to be the shadow minister—weighed into this debate. I am sure members will mention Carnarvon in a bit more detail in the debate to come. I have the minister’s direct quote from *The West Australian* of 20 December last year. He was asked about juvenile crime in the regions, with specific reference to Carnarvon. The article states —

“The challenge that we confront ... with high rates —

That is, juvenile offending rates —

disproportionate rates of Aboriginal juvenile offending, is a result of 200 years plus of disadvantage, disempowerment and dysfunction in communities,” he said. “It’s not excusable, but it also won’t be resolved overnight ...

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In the first instance, he made an excuse, saying it is the community's problem, and then he said it is not excusable. Hon Paul Papalia, the Minister for Police, has his feet firmly straddled on each side of the fence. He says that there is an excuse for this and then he says there is no excuse. He cannot make up his mind. He is giving out these mixed messages. The Premier is out there saying that we need to be tough on crime and the police minister is saying, "Well, actually, it's excusable. No, it's not. Yes, it is. No, it's not." It sounds like the government trying to provide an energy policy. It is absolutely embarrassing.

Hon Dan Caddy interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Mine is coming, member; do not worry.

The government cannot work out whether it is tough on crime or whether social factors excuse crime, despite the fact that the crimes exist.

How successful is the government in combatting crime using the laws that exist? The answer, I think in their own words, is that it cannot. The government has to make excuses. After the police minister, Hon Paul Papalia, led the way, the Premier jumped on board to also suggest it was a very complex problem. The social problems are very complex, the legal ones not so much. The Premier has also taken a fairly conservative approach. The Prime Minister was asked about the cashless welfare process, which the genuine conservatives have always said was a good process that improved the welfare of the people of Western Australia. The Labor Party cannot help itself, as this time, interestingly, I think the federal Labor Party is far more socialist than the state one, which is a chagrin to me, but anyway. The Labor Party could not wait to reverse this; it is dabbling in social policy. This is something that actually made a difference.

I have an interesting quote from an article that appeared in *The Kimberley Echo*, and was repeated in *The West Australian* only yesterday. I give a shout-out to journalist Sarah Crawford. It states —

An East Kimberley town has experienced twice the number of children going to school hungry, fewer residents spending their money at the supermarket and more people splurging at the bottle shop since the cashless debit card was made voluntary.

One former Kununurra youth worker said women had reported they were threatened with violence by family members if they didn't opt out of the welfare scheme, which quarantines up to 80 per cent of payments.

This scheme was actually doing some good work. What was it doing? It was looking after the welfare of some of the most vulnerable people in the community. The socialists in the Albanese government could not wait to reverse this decision. I think they made a mistake. I am really interested. I thought that the coverage of this issue was fantastic. On the front page of Tuesday's paper, there is this reporting —

But Mr McGowan refused to back the Albanese Government's scrapping of the cashless welfare debit card, which has been blamed for a rise in crime in towns such as Laverton, Leonora and Halls Creek.

I told members that I quite frequently agree with the Premier, though not all the time. I think he is often bad. On occasions, when I think he gets it right, I am happy to agree with him. In this case, he refused to back the Prime Minister, and I think he is probably right. I would like to see him come out and be a bit more forthright on that. Like the police minister, who is out there trying to straddle both sides of the fence, the Premier seems to be doing it on this side as well. They are out there trying to say, "We're tough on crime but sometimes we're not", and the outcome is bad for the people of Western Australia.

The question is whether this government has the capacity to deliver an adequate response to prevent crime, an adequate response to crime or even an adequate response to the ultimate penalties appropriated for crime. Other members may well raise issues such as Banksia Hill. Once again, the Premier has obviously done some polling and come out and said, "Go hard on Banksia Hill. That's what the people want; they want to see you being tough on crime." That is absolutely fine. I think in this instance on law and order, he is a very poll-driven Premier. I think that is absolutely right. What is this Premier acknowledging in that process? I think he is acknowledging that his government cannot keep people in the community safe from these young criminals. It cannot control the criminal actions of this group of people. When these people are ultimately in custody in a place like Banksia Hill, the government cannot control them there either. It cannot control these young lawbreakers in the community and it cannot control them even when they are locked up. The government cannot control them in the community, it cannot keep the community safe, it cannot control them in the prison system and it cannot keep the prison guards and other prisoners safe. This is a failure at both ends of the argument. This is a failure of the government that I think extends beyond all the other failures it has delivered to the state of Western Australia in recent years, and they are multitudinous. This is a failure of the government in the extreme. It cannot manage this process in the slightest. It cannot control crime in the community and it cannot control criminals when they have actually, finally, got to the custodial end of the debate.

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What happens? Because the government is trying to play both ends of the argument against each other and because it is trying to be both tough on crime and weak on crime, it sends a massive mixed message. When the Minister for Police, Hon Paul Papalia, goes out and says that these issues of crime relate to social issues and are not actually issues of crime, he is empowering antisocial and criminal behaviour. He is out there, empowering those people. When they are placed in custody, no matter what facility they are in, the government on one hand says that it is tough on crime and on the other says, “You have an excuse.” What happens? The government absolutely encourages the sort of behaviour that the Premier is out there trying to say is not acceptable.

These people are deliberately damaging these facilities; they are making a political statement. There is a political statement being made in these lockups, and the only reason that this is gaining currency out there is that the government is happy to play both ends of the policy divide against each other. It is saying, “Yes, that’s okay; we accept it’s a political statement. That’s okay. Oh, by the way, you can’t do that; it’s highly illegal. You’re not allowed to.” The mixed messaging from this government on law and order is an embarrassment to whoever wrote it.

I suspect that the Premier and the Minister for Police are perhaps not communicating very well. Certainly, if the Premier sends the Minister for Police over to England and Ireland fairly soon, he might get a chance to settle all this down, but the mixed messaging is problematic and this government has no answers. I am not suggesting that we need to change the law. As I said at the start of my contribution, the laws exist. If someone ram-raids a business 40 or 50 times over a year, every one of those ram-raids is illegal. If someone damages businesses so that they cannot operate, it is illegal. Ramming police cars with stolen vehicles is illegal.

The opposition has come out and said that we would like to see some tougher laws on that. We want to send the message that it is illegal. These behaviours are not acceptable. It is not good enough for the Minister for Police to say, “Well, they’re kind of acceptable, but in circumstances where it’s on the front page of the newspaper, it’s not acceptable.” The laws exist; the behaviours are not acceptable. This chamber needs to get that message to the government—that that needs to be a constantly reinforced message. The Premier has been doing that a bit, but he is being undermined by his own people. These laws exist. Businesses are being damaged. People are being threatened. Police officers are being threatened, and it is not acceptable.

I noted one of the comments the Premier made in the media in which he said that there are more police officers now than ever before. Guess what? I do not think that is accurate, because most of the time we are losing more than we are gaining, and the reason for that is that police are not being respected because the government is not enforcing the law. The government is not backing up police officers in the community. It is not saying that the laws need to be obeyed. It makes excuses; it excuses those behaviours, and that is not acceptable.

The government needs to support its police officers and government workers, all of whom are trying to do their job, but the political will has to be there. I have to say: I look across the chamber and I see the political will flagging. Please make an effort. Support law and order, support police officers, support public servants and let us have an end to this double messaging that does not work.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan) [10.34 am]: I stand to emphatically support this motion. I say at the outset that I will present some unambiguous figures today—some of which I have presented before—that will emphatically solidify why this motion needs to be supported. The first issue is that we have a massive morale issue with our police in Western Australia. That is a fact. The second issue is that we have a massive, spiralling, out-of-control crime problem within our state, particularly in the regions. That is a fact; the statistics will show that. The government has spent pretty much the last 18 months pleading the Sergeant Schultz defence: it knows nothing. There is nothing to see here. That is what we have had consistently from the Premier and the Minister for Police. It has shifted in the last month to: it is the parents’ fault. That has come out in the rhetoric of the Premier, and it came out in response to a question I asked yesterday. The government has decided that it is going to take the populist line and say that it is the parents’ fault. We all know that some children and their parents in the regions face enormous social issues, so for a Labor government to take the populist line with some of those families is really disappointing.

I state again that there is a massive issue with police morale and numbers: 473 police officers resigned last year. That is three times the average. The last time resignation figures came even close to that was in 2007, under a previous Labor government, when there were 300 resignations. There is a morale problem. The government promised 950 additional police, but it is not going to get anywhere near that. The government can go half a world away and try to recruit police to come here, but they will spend six months here and be off again, I can tell members. Police officers are resigning in their hundreds. A further 61 officers have resigned since 1 January. Does that mean that they are happy? No. But according to the Minister for Police, the attrition rate is entirely attributable to the economy and other opportunities. How naive is that? It is garbage; absolute garbage.

The Minister for Police changed tack when he was asked about cultural issues within the Western Australia Police Force and whether he was responsible for that. Yesterday he responded in the other place by saying, according to the uncorrected *Hansard* —

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I am flattered that the Leader of the Liberal Party thinks that I have an impact on the statewide morale of the Western Australia Police Force to the extent that I have destroyed it; it is extraordinary that he would make that claim! Many of them may not even know I am there. I say to officers when I am out there—I have a little bit of experience in wearing uniform that the reality is that morale is a consequence of local leadership more than anything else.

So it is not his fault; it is the leaders in the police. It is their fault. First it was the economy, now the leaders in the police are creating this morale problem. No, they are not.

The Police Union carried out a survey last year and it garnered the largest response on record—thousands of police responded. Of those who responded, 74.4 per cent indicated that their workload had significantly increased or increased over the three to four previous years, compared with 67.2 per cent of respondents in the 2017 survey. In the regions, the percentage of officers who said that their workload had significantly increased or increased was 85.2 per cent. Is it any wonder that we have problems with policing in our regions when 85.2 per cent of them are indicating that their workload has increased significantly? In addition to that, 64.6 per cent of respondents perceived that the overall morale within Western Australia Police Force was poor. Indeed, the “poor” percentage across three categories was significantly higher compared with the 2017 percentages. These figures are compelling. There is a morale problem with our police. We would not have 473 police officers resigning in one year if there was not a morale problem. They are not resigning to go up north to drive Haulpaks; they are resigning because they are absolutely fed up.

I will park that for a moment and ask: why do we have crime issues? Everything is not pleasant out there, I can tell members right now. We can talk about the streets of Northridge, Hillarys and Scarborough; what about Carnarvon, Broome and Kalgoorlie? This is not the gospel according to Pete; members can look at the WAPOL website. The figures are there every day in black and white; they are updated every three months, and the latest figures are appalling. There has been a 13.9 per cent increase in selected offences against the person; a 34.9 per cent increase in family-related offences. Crime is out of control out there. I highly recommend that members look at the regions. In regional Western Australia there were 7 323 family assaults in 2017. There were 12 062 last year. That is almost double, under the government’s watch. There were 3 571 non-family assaults in 2017 and 4 631 in 2022. There were 987 cases of threatening behaviour in families reported in 2017 and 2 290 last year.

I have all these figures, but I have parlous little time. I suggest members look at the figures on Carnarvon, Broome, Halls Creek and Kalgoorlie, just to name a few. Members will see on the WAPOL website, which is very accessible, that every regional area is out of control. Look at the metropolitan area. It is out of control. We have an escalation in crime and a decrease in the number of police officers. We might have an increase in actual numbers at the moment, but they are in rapid decline. Four hundred and seventy-three of those men and women in blue gave the government the single-finger salute because they have had enough of being disrespected.

As far as the regions are concerned, let us look at this media statement titled “Operation Regional Shield to crack down on Kimberley youth crime”. This media release came out with great fanfare on 16 February 2022. It states —

More police officers and operational police assets have been deployed to the Kimberley as part of a massive crackdown on juvenile crime.

Police Minister Paul Papalia today joined Deputy Commissioner Col Blanch in Broome to detail the new measures aimed at tackling high risk offending by juvenile offenders.

I asked a question about this. It goes on. It is a load of rubbish. I asked a question right at the end of last year about how many more resources have gone into Broome and Kalgoorlie because of the escalating crime. He basically told me where to go. He said —

Operation Regional Shield is a police operation directed and controlled by the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner of Police, rightly, determines where and how police resources are allocated to achieve operational outcomes.

He did not give me an answer because the government knew what the answer was going to be. Nothing. Crime has escalated. I asked about Carnarvon yesterday. I got a bit of an answer, which was good. The government could answer my question about Carnarvon because it knows it is a hotspot at the moment. It could not answer about Broome and Kalgoorlie three months ago. This is the standard of the answers we get from this government.

Then I asked about the multi-pronged attack the government is spruiking. Let us look at the strategies. Do members know what the strategies are? This is insulting —

Operation Regional Shield is just one feature of the state government’s response to juvenile crime in regional communities. The challenges involving juvenile justice are complex and easy answers do not exist, but we are getting on with addressing these issues. The state government is playing its part, —

This is the killer —

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but this is not all a government responsibility. We need the community and parents to step up.

What an insulting response. If government members have the courage of their convictions and they have added all these police officers, where are they? Why are they not in Broome? Why are they not in Kalgoorlie? Why are they not in Carnarvon? Why are they not? I will tell members why. It is because they are resigning in droves. Where are all the current vacancies? Let me tell members that of all the 182 police officer vacancies in Western Australia, 96 are in the regions. That is what we have. They are the facts. I am not making them up. It is on the government's website. Members can go and find it there or in responses to questions that I asked.

What has the government been doing? Last year it shunted off a pile of police to act as ambulance drivers. There were 175 code 85 St John Ambulance medical tasks transmitted for action between 23 May and 30 November 2022. The police were used as ambulance drivers. No wonder they are resigning. We have a major issue here with crime in Western Australia. We have a major issue with police. There is a cultural issue in our police force. Crime is out of control. To the Labor government, stop blaming parents. Listen to police. Treat them with respect and members will find that their actions will be reciprocated.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [10.44 am]: I stand in support of my colleagues who are highlighting the importance of this issue, which the government seems to have only just become aware of. We saw the comment here and the deferral of responsibility. Now that the problem is absolutely apparent, it is unconscionable. If people would take the time and read the front page of the *Broome Advertiser* today, they will see the data that I raised in this place: 164 police officers were assaulted in the Kimberley in the calendar year of 2022. It is little wonder that police are leaving in droves. It is unacceptable that we have this level of disrespect in the community to our thin blue line that keeps us safe. This is the result of years of disrespect that this government has given to our police and our community in law and order and keeping our communities safe. I am going to repeat that response because Hon Peter Collier raised it. I was shocked when I heard it. I saw the deflection going on by the Premier in a sort of cavalier way by blaming parents and saying it is all the parents' fault. This is not all the government's responsibility. The communities and parents need to step up. I can say the community will step up. If this issue is not resolved by 2025, the community will step up and throw the Labor Party out of government because the Labor Party fails to take responsibility for the safety of our community. I can hear people start to arc up on this. But the point is I deal with it on a daily basis. I see it firsthand. I sit with the proprietors in Halls Creek, Kununurra and Broome who have had their businesses smashed on a regular basis. It becomes a regular thing; they have to pick up the phone in the middle of the night and find that, yet again, an alarm is ringing or something is going on.

I talked to the owner of a dealership who said it costs him thousands of dollars a week in dealing with rocks that are thrown onto his vehicles. They are vehicles, by the way, of community members. No thought is given to whose vehicles they are. It does not matter whether it is a vehicle that he is repairing for someone who is disadvantaged and doing the job for free or a new vehicle that has been parked in that yard because it is the local government's new vehicle purchases. Those vehicles are being trashed constantly by roaming young people who seem to have no future. I feel for those kids. Clearly, this is a result of government failure. We see the Premier come out and say that it is the parents' responsibility. He should use the word "guardian" because oftentimes it is the government's responsibility. The government is the guardian of many of these kids. The Premier had to move the Minister for Child Protection on because she was not doing a decent job. We see the fruit of that now because we are seeing the complete breakdown among certain sectors in our community.

Let us go to the issue of facts. I was shocked when I asked the question the other day of the minister representing the Minister for Police on 15 February about the 164 assaults on police. I was shocked because the response I got was —

The Western Australia Police Force requires the honourable member to provide the source for the claimed statistics ...

My goodness. Someone in the minister's office was prepared for that response to come back into this place. Just go onto the website and look at that time series data. It is available. We just go to the menu and select "time series". It is there in black and white highlighting the terrible situation that we are facing in the Gascoyne, the goldfields, the Pilbara and the Kimberley, which is my part of the world and my region. Finally, we got an answer because we are starting to push it out there and the media are obviously interested because they are getting the complaints from police themselves. I hear it on a regular basis when I talk to police. They are finding it so frustrating. They are tearing their hair out as to what is going on. But we finally get this response —

The number of people charged was 96, noting that assaulting a police officer includes an application of any force ranging from spitting, slapping and kicking to punching and more physical acts.

I hope the minister was not trying to downplay those factors that were affecting police, whether they be spitting, slapping, punching or kicking. I hope it is not the aim of that answer to somehow downplay those 164 assaults. Every single one of them is damaging. Every single one of them is disrespectful to the thin blue line that we stand for and protect, because police are the people who stand up and protect us. I know because my father was the local police

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sergeant in New Zealand. He had to retire early because of a serious assault. These incidents affect families for a very long time. This goes to the heart of the families who are affected. I sympathise with those 164 officers who had to come home and tell their families that they were the recipient of an assault at work; that they had been spat on, kicked or punched, or were subject to more physical acts that could include the ramming of their police vehicle. There have been in the order of 30 rammings in the Kimberley. It is disgusting that that is the figure but that nothing has been done to seriously attack this issue.

We have to do more. We see already that the “doing more” bit that the government came out with—the juvenile justice strategy and funding for the juvenile diversion centre—has been deferred because of the floods. What kind of response is that? Crime does not go away because of a natural disaster. In fact, if anything, it places more pressure on our community. It causes more disruption in the community. We should be investing more in diversion. We should be investing more in addressing those families. If parents are not doing the right thing, the government should do something about that and not just blame the parents and bat that away as though it is not its responsibility. The government sits in the seat of responsibility. The government is responsible.

I want to stand for my community and I want to stand for safety. I want to stand for a better situation so that our community can feel proud as it wakes up in the morning and does not wake up to a social media post of another burnt vehicle, or two or three, being parked on one of the local reserves. We want to be able to wake up in the morning and know that our community and all our kids are safe. Our kids have a future. We need to start addressing these systemic issues as well. We need a plan to deal with child truancy because every time a kid does not turn up to school, that child does not get a good education. The child faces the precipice of disadvantage and starts to look at other alternatives—through social media, for example. We need to get the kids off social media. These things are complex—we know they are—but it is the job of a government to deal with complexity and nuance, and deal with the situation and challenge those things at the source. We need to deal with it.

Recent results for some schools in the Kimberley indicated 10 per cent participation in year 12, and that is not good enough. We see constant deterioration in that participation. We cannot keep blaming COVID; we cannot keep blaming natural disasters. We have to deal with this because we are losing a generation, and we are also losing the trust of our communities that we have long enjoyed. Regional communities can be wonderful places. I was raised in a regional town in New Zealand and now I have the pleasure and joy of living in a regional community in Western Australia. I love the regions and I love that people there can have an outdoor lifestyle and build long-term, deep and meaningful friendships that might not ever develop in the metropolitan area. The regions can be beautiful places but right now we are confronting a major scourge and it is not good enough. The Premier and government members need to get into those communities and have a meaningful conversation with local government, the Aboriginal corporations, the not-for-profits and the youth services. The government needs to have a meaningful conversation with our police as well.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [10.54 am]: I am going to insert some facts into this debate. Before I talk about how in fact crimes against the person and property are down 11 per cent across the state since the peak of the scourge of crime when the last Liberal government was in place, I want to put this on the record: if you are the victim of a crime and of antisocial behaviour, it is distressing, frightening, disheartening, frustrating and disruptive. I live in a street that has had a spate of break-ins to cars, our cars, parked on the street. Sidebar—they did not take anything from my husband’s car, basically because I think it was too messy! I reckon they broke the window and said, “We’re not going in there.” But it was still disruptive and inconvenient. Our holiday place in Broome was broken into and burgled. It was inconvenient, time-consuming, expensive and distressing. A young friend of mine who is six months’ pregnant was mugged on the restaurant strip in Victoria Park. It is a highly populated area and it was midweek and well lit. She was six months’ pregnant and she was mugged. It is distressing. If it is someone’s business or livelihood, it is disruptive and distressing and it has a flow-on effect on insurance premiums, so it costs more money. There is no question about this government recognising that when that happens to the individual, it is distressing and it is of concern.

I make that point because when it is you as the individual, it does not matter what the statistics say, it is distressing. However, the stats do matter because across Western Australia crimes against the person and property are down 11 per cent compared with 2015 when crime peaked under the Liberal–National government. If members opposite cast their minds back, they will remember that one of the things that was going on at that time was the scourge of methamphetamine. It was the big problem. Liza Harvey was the Leader of the Opposition and Minister for Police at the time. The debate was going on about Perth having the highest meth usage rate per capita. In reference to meth, an article in the Bullsbrook–Ellenbrook *The Advocate*, and a number of community-based newspapers, stated —

“Perth has the highest usage rate per capita than any other city,” Mr O’Callaghan said.

“Despite WA police taking half a tonne off the streets in the past 12 months, the usage rate has remained the same.

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“It’s about stopping the demand as well as the supply.”

Ms Harvey echoed comments made last week by Premier Colin Barnett.

“The government cannot solve the meth problem without the community’s help,” she said.

What is that? The government cannot do it by itself? The government needs the help of the community? Shock-horror! If we take that view, surely the people on the other side need to rethink what they have just said.

Several members interjected.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I listened in absolute silence to members opposite, despite some of the nonsense I heard, and I ask for the same in return because I have limited time and I have an awful lot that I want to cover.

Much has been made about the outrage over what the Premier is alleged to have said, so let us incorporate into the record what he actually said. I will read from a transcript of a press conference held by the Premier on Thursday, 9 February this year.

When asked a question in the context of Laverton, he stated —

... I say it regularly, the State has a role, we do our bit, programs to have helped families, particularly with their children, additional police officers, funding for PCYCs, additional funding for children in care, making sure children in foster care are more appropriately supported to an older age. We do all those things, but it’s a partnership, it’s a partnership with families ...

He went on to say —

... I constantly get the finger pointed that our public servants or our community development officers or our police officers, who are doing their bit, or our teachers, they’re doing their bit, they’re out there, they’re trying to help families, and particularly those with children who might be having issues, but parents need to help as well, families need to help ...

He went on to say —

... people will just say, ‘Why isn’t the State doing more?’, and we put more resources in and then they say, ‘Why aren’t you doing more?’ ...

So, all I’m saying to you all is, and I’m going to keep saying it, because people like me sending these messages to families and communities is important, families and parents need to parent.

He did not say that it is not a binary argument. He did not deflect responsibility back onto parents alone; he said that it is a partnership. This is what we do—whether it is adding additional police officers or implementing and expanding the very successful Target 120 program, which is about intervening in those families in which children who have already been identified as most likely to come into contact with the juvenile justice system. That is a fantastic program that was initiated by the former Minister for Child Protection. It was one of our election commitments in 2017. Sidebar—the former Minister for Child Protection asked for a change in portfolio. She was not sacked; she asked for a change. There is one person in this chamber who was sacked. I note he is not in the chamber at the moment. He is out on “urgent” parliamentary business. Do not put forward the proposition that Hon Simone McGurk was sacked—she was not. Like me, she asked for a change in portfolio and she got it.

A major impact of COVID at the start of last year in every jurisdiction in Australia and just about every modern jurisdiction around the world was an escalation of family and domestic violence assaults. There are all sorts of reasons for that, and academics will be writing papers about it for a long time to come. There is an extraordinary level of anxiety in the community and the attendant consequences on people’s health that we did not have before the pandemic. The increase in the number of assaults also has something to do with the harmful use of alcohol and drugs. All of that is true, and we are responding to community safety issues by growing the police force by the biggest number in the history of the state. It is such a lazy argument to say this is a binary issue, which is effectively what the Hon Dr Steve Thomas said. He said that we have to choose to either be hard on law and order or have a social policy to address issues and intervene early. It is not binary; we have to do both, and that is exactly what this government is doing.

I worry for democracy with such a lazy opposition that does not do the work to support its arguments. Hon Dr Steve Thomas wrote this motion; he wanted to debate it.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I listened to the honourable member in silence. It is a time-limited debate. I would like to have half an hour to talk about this issue, but I have 15 minutes—I have only six left.

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It is not a binary argument. We have to do all those things along the spectrum. We have to intervene to prevent and enforce, and then we have to apply the penalty. We have to do all those things. That is what this government is doing. The Premier did not say, “Let’s just focus on the individual parents.” He did not say anything of the kind. He said we need to do the whole spectrum of things.

I want to address some of the facts and the statistics. If we compare the same quarter in 2022–23 with 2015–16—that is the last time the other side was in charge of law and order and community safety—across Western Australia, the total number of selected offences against the person or property decreased by 11.6 per cent; dwelling burglary decreased by 15.2 per cent; and stealing of motor vehicles decreased by 20.44 per cent. For regional Western Australia, if we compare the same quarter in 2022–23 with 2021–22, burglary dwelling offences decreased by 5.8 per cent; burglary non-dwelling offences decreased by 28.7 per cent; stealing of motor vehicles decreased by 18.7 per cent; and stealing from car offences decreased 0.6 per cent. Those are the stats. Members opposite might not like it but those are the numbers. I get that when you are one of the people affected by an offence, it has an impact on you. I do not walk away from that at all.

I want to make a point about Carnarvon. I note that the Premier met with a range of people, including Aboriginal leaders. He met with, I think, five respected Aboriginal leaders, and four of those five expressed to him in the meeting their support for his commentary about the partnership with families and how parents need to take responsibility. I also want to make the point that the local shire president expressed to the Premier his support—he has expressed it publicly—about the work of police in Carnarvon. The shire president went into the police station in, I think, the last 48 hours to personally thank the police for their work in Carnarvon. The majority of people who met with the Premier during his visit last Friday expressed that point of view as well.

In the three minutes I have left, I want to tackle the issue that Hon Tjorn Sibma—I am glad he is back in the chamber—raised in members’ statements last night. He reflected on the answer he got to a question that he asked in question time yesterday. Essentially, he asked the Minister for Child Protection how many children in care had had contact with police in 2022 and how many had been charged with a criminal offence. He did not like the response he got that that information is held in individual files and it would take too many resources to provide it. Members, it is worth noting that as at 31 December 2022 there were 5 146 children in the care of the state. We can have a debate about that and how they got into the care of the state another time. Hon Tjorn Sibma put the argument that somehow the answer that the information is held in individual files and we cannot correlate that information for him was arrogant. He referenced the tone. He said that the answer should be reconsidered and he took umbrage. I think he was trying to build an argument that this is an arrogant government. Maybe that is what he was trying to do. Maybe that was his narrative.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: I don’t have to make that argument.

Hon SUE ELLERY: You do, mate. Because, honourable member—I retract “mate”. You are not, so I will retract that.

Hon Tjorn Sibma interjected.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have got only one minute and 40 seconds left.

There are 5 146 children in care. It is not an unreasonable proposition to answer a question that asked, in part, “who have had contact with police”—what does that even mean?—by saying that it requires a lot of manual work to provide an answer. If the member is genuinely interested in that area, which is not unreasonable, a hardworking opposition member could find any number of ways to drill down and get more information, including—oh gosh, I do not know—talking to the stakeholder organisations. I have been the Minister for Child Protection and the shadow Minister for Child Protection. I used to come to Parliament every Sunday when Parliament was sitting and do my research and questions, and plan how I could get the information I needed to prosecute the argument that I wanted to put. I understand there are fewer opposition members, but if they worked a bit harder, maybe opposition members could make their points. I think the conclusion that the honourable member drew yesterday on the answer he got was unfair. I think, as a contributor in Parliament, the member is better than that. The answer that he got was not unreasonable at all.

I will end with these comments: when it happens to you, the crime that people have described is frightening and distressing, and we understand that, but it takes more than a binary response to fix it.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [11.09 am]: That was a very interesting introduction, which I think is completely undeniable, to my contribution in support of this motion. I think that the government’s response, with the exception of that just provided by the Leader of the House, has generally been muted. I will tell members this from the opposition benches: we know we have hit the mark when government members look down and do not say a word because I have hit the target. I might just reflect on the statement I made last night. It is staggering that probably some 18 hours after I gave a member’s statement, which was quite reasonable, the government is still

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feeling hurt that I had the temerity to ask a question. I can assure members opposite that it will not be the first and only time I ask that question. If the Leader of the House wants me to keep digging on this, I am more than happy to accept that invitation and challenge. The Leader of the House has been here long enough to know what I took objection to. I am sure that if I went through the *Hansard* records of all the Leader of the House's contributions in this chamber over the last 20 years, I would find that on occasion she might have been upset with the quality of an answer she received from the government of the day.

Hon Sue Ellery: Frequently.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I absolutely agree. All that has happened is that the sides have changed. What was the problem? The problem was in the attitude. It is unacceptable, frankly, notwithstanding the richness of the data source, for, effectively, a department to say that it is too hard to give me an answer, so it will not try. I actually worry for ministers who take on a portfolio after two or three predecessors in the second or third term of a government, because the settings are largely against them. What I hoped to do was encourage and wish well the new Minister for Child Protection, and I hoped that she would actually be able to get to grips with some of the challenges and some of the constraints placed on her department. What I found galling was not so much that there were manual records, but that six or seven years after the trumpeted machinery-of-government changes, when the government smashed all these departments together and the Auditor General called out the government for the most shambolic, dysfunctional and rushed amalgamation process in the state government's history, and said that its IT and financial systems were not up to date, and that the government was not culturally aligned, the government has done nothing to fix that. The government has done nothing because it is lazy. It has done nothing because it is arrogant. It has done nothing because it takes the people of this state for granted. Members opposite are all smiling now, but I remember that the Premier gets away with a glib answer here and a glib answer there with absolutely no pushback from members opposite. They are here only because of him, and guess what? Many of you will not be here in two years' time because of him. Do members opposite know why? It is because, collectively, they are failing the people of Western Australia, day in, day out—fail, fail, fail!

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I do not need to take interjections from somebody on her victory lap. She has given up and the Premier has given up. Guess who else the government has given up on? It has given up on the police of this state. The government is more than happy to take credit for the work of the police, just as it is more than happy to take the credit for the work of the nurses of this state. The government is too incompetent, too lazy and too morally moribund to do anything like the day-to-day work of our police and nurses. What is the government doing for police today? Why are they exiting the service? It is because they do not feel valued. Who do they not feel valued by? They do not feel valued by the people who take them for granted. Who is responsible for that? What is the point at which the government will accept responsibility for anything these days? It does not accept responsibility for questions on notice and it does not accept responsibility for the quality of answers to questions without notice. It gets upset when someone dares criticise it.

I do not worry about the government's feelings. I do not care. But what I do care about is community safety. That is what the opposition cares about. It is very interesting to hear selective statistics quoted by the Leader of the House because she can pick any watermark she likes and compare them in a way that is favourable to the government. I know that not many government members have a mathematical or scientific background, although some of them do, but what is important in statistics? It is identifying the trend. In some aspects, the rate of criminal behaviour and offending has deteriorated, but over the last five years, there have been some very troubling signs.

To balance the record today, let me quote the statistics that the government does not like to hear. This is drawn from the police website. Over the last five years, from 2017–18, when the McGowan government came to power, until 2021–22, there has been an eight per cent increase in sexual offences. There has been a 29 per cent increase in assaults within the family, a 17 per cent increase in the rate of assaults that are non-family based, an eight per cent increase in robbery, and a 21 per cent increase in graffiti. What I have not included in those statistics, because I have been looking at the last five years, and what it is also important to focus on, is the emerging trends in two aspects—non-dwelling burglaries, which is burglary of commercial premises and the like and which increased 33 per cent last year, and stealing, which went up 15 per cent. I am happy to praise and support the government when it does things well, but it needs to tell the full truth and it needs to give people the full picture. Frankly, I do not think the government is doing that. It is doing some commendable work in some areas. Frankly, I might just provide some advice. I know the Minister for Police. I like him as a person and I understand the need to actually grapple with organised crime to deal with the apex predators of the criminal ecosystem. But I would like the Minister for Police to put just about as much effort, if not more, into addressing community safety issues as he does organised crime. Because, I think, frankly, if someone's house has been burgled, or if someone has been belted up or it is the fourth offender someone has tried to apprehend because their bottle shop is being ripped off, day in, day out, they do not feel safer just because the Minister for Police is standing next to a .50 calibre rifle.

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Hon Dan Caddy: Interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Just listen. Deal with the issues as they are. The government is taking the police for granted. Why are they leaving? Has the government conducted exit interviews? Are the police pleased with the government? There are certain aspects that the government needs to come to grips with if it wants to be a responsible government. This could be a good government. It has absolute total power—total control. It has a budget in surplus. There is nothing really that the government cannot do if it puts its mind to it, so why is it failing the community of Western Australia? It makes absolutely no sense. All I can try to fathom is that it is not the government's priority. This is it: community safety is not a government priority. It never has been, and it never will be. What is the government's priority? The very first thing it tried to do was rewrite the electoral map. It did that almost within the first two months of us sitting. What else has it done? Yesterday we took planning laws away from local governments. That has merit, but this is where the government is directing its fire. It is not dealing with street-level criminality. There are problems but there are no visible police. People do not feel safe. The government cannot provide any protection to the people on whom the government relies. This is a dismal failure of government in community safety terms. It is not even trying. Instead of coming in here and getting upset because I asked members an uncomfortable question, why do government members not redirect all that misplaced emotion and for once just do your job? Lift your game. You are a shambles of a government that is deteriorating precipitously on a daily basis. Hold your head in shame. Those members here who do have a backbone, why not start holding cabinet to account? They should not worry about their promotion; they should worry about the community they purportedly represent. Shame on you.

HON ROSIE SAHANNA (Mining and Pastoral) [11.19 am]: I would like to speak to the motion. As an Aboriginal person, I have sat and listened today, and also yesterday, to the debate on youth issues. I would like to start with a response to the comments made by Hon Tjorn Sibma yesterday about youth crime and the importance of family support and positive parenting. He stated that the future of our young people needs to be built on the strength of families and parental responsibility. I agree with that statement completely. He commented on the despair of some young people and about young people who harm themselves and others. This is an issue very close to my heart. Earlier this month, the Premier made a statement about youth crime and the role of parents in keeping their children out of trouble. He said that he wants parents to take more responsibility for their kids and that parents need to parent. For all of us here who are parents, that is our responsibility. As I parent, I like to know where my kids are after six o'clock at night. I like to make sure that they are home, asleep. I like to know where they are, what they are doing and who they are with. At the end of the day, that is a parent's responsibility. Stop blaming everyone else and making excuses because it is a parental responsibility. I wholeheartedly agree with the Premier on this statement. Parents need to parent. It is not the responsibility of the state to parent these kids who are out on the streets committing crimes and harming themselves and others. I come from Broome and not that long ago I was there talking with people about the youth issue. Do members know what? Those people said the same thing: where are the parents and what are they doing? Having said that, I think that members will find that a lot of people around Western Australia, including in Carnarvon, would agree with the Premier's statement. He is right. The government is not a parent.

A range of issues need to be addressed and parents need to be willing and able to parent their children. We need to provide support for those families to build their own capacity to be nurturing and able to break the cycle. We need to provide support for parents and show them how to take on the responsibility of nurturing a child, showing them the right way to do things, how to keep them out of trouble and how to make sure they are safe at home. Often grandparents are the main carers for children in Aboriginal families, so they need that support too. The state government is aware of this and is putting more resourcing into social programs to intervene in families and build the strength and support that is needed to protect these children within their family. But the community needs to step up and utilise those services. It needs to want to break the cycle. This is what Premier McGowan was saying in his statement. The government can throw all the money in the world at building resources, but the community and the parents need to step up and accept that support and use the programs to break the cycle.

There was a question of whether this government has the capacity to make all the changes needed to prevent youth crime and to keep people in the community safe from young criminals. It has been said that this government is failing to manage the process of youth crime and rehabilitation. I point out that these issues have not been around just since the Labor government came to power in 2017. The social issues and disadvantage affecting Aboriginal people have not appeared overnight. These issues have been around for a long time. The current government has not just become aware of these issues. It has been said that the government has no answers to these issues, but these problems do not have one answer. No one answer will magically make youth crime stop and parents more accountable and aware of their responsibilities. These issues cannot be fixed overnight and the rehashing of the crime statistics and incarceration levels over and over and blaming the government is not an answer. It is not helping anything at all. The community and parents need to step up. This is not a government response. Across the board, I have heard members opposite talk about the issues in regional areas. Hon Neil Thomson made a comment about the youth

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facilities at Fitzroy Crossing. I do not know where he has been over the last couple of months, but there has been a flood in that area. If he thinks that we cannot go wrong because of a disaster, then he needs to rethink his comments. Thank you.

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [11.25 am]: I will not speak for long because I know that others want to speak, but, like the incredibly hardworking Leader of the House, I want to correct some of the mistruths that have been peddled in this place. I made some notes while I was listening. What an ill-informed and embarrassing attack on the Minister for Police and this government by Hon Neil Thomson, Hon Peter Collier and Hon Tjorn Sibma—the three wise men from the right. Hon Neil Thomson said that it is like the government has only just become aware of this issue. We were in this place before Hon Neil Thomson started peddling mistruths about what was happening in the Kimberley and the issues there.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I listened to the member's drivel in silence; give me the same respect. The issues in the Kimberley have manifested themselves over many generations, as Hon Rosie Sahanna said, not just in the five minutes that the member has lived up there since he was banished from his departmental role in Perth. The McGowan government has put in place a plan of action that has been designed to go well into the future. It is disappointing that the member does not recognise the hard work of the Minister for Police to inform himself about the situation in the Kimberley. He has done numerous trips all over this state to inform himself and tool up the Western Australia Police Force to respond to these challenges. I have said it in this place before that police in the Kimberley are now better resourced than ever before. We have over 30 more police officers in the Kimberley than there were when we came to government.

The police minister announced Operation Regional Shield up there last year, which is heavily focused on the Kimberley and looking out for what is happening there. As members will appreciate, developing a sustained approach to targeting criminal activity across the largest policing jurisdiction in the world is not simple. Along with Operation Regional Shield, Operations Clay and Heatshield have been operating concurrently since December 2021 and resulted in the deployment of extra officers into that space. Hon Neil Thomson said that the Premier and the minister need to get out there and talk to people. What does he think the Premier was doing last week? What does he think the police minister has been doing for the last two years? As part of his role, this minister travels around the state. He talks to the police and the police leadership in regional areas. He talks to local government leadership and community leaders in those areas, and he will continue to do so. I do not need to remind members where we were at in this state in 2015–16, because the Leader of the House has already done that. She has already outlined where we have come from since that time. She outlined not only the completely inept management of policing in this state when members opposite were in government, but also the complete hypocrisy they bring to this chamber when they take the line they are taking in this place. I will tell members opposite what: keep this up. They will be in opposition for a very, very long time.

HON JAMES HAYWARD (South West) [11.28 am]: One of the problems is that the reality is that this government is fighting a bushfire with a bucket of water. The fact that government members have come into this place and cannot acknowledge that they are being overwhelmed is absolutely the problem. All the communities in the Kimberley—Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Broome—are absolutely at their wit's end. The government has absolutely failed to provide a solution. All I have heard from members today is, "Look, we're doing this and we're doing that." The government is not doing enough. I agree with the government that the problem has not arisen overnight. It is a difficult problem to overcome. The reality is that when this state was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's number one priority was to keep people safe. It closed regional borders and it introduced the most incredible powers so it could intervene and make sure nothing happened. The whole of this government worked to keep people safe during COVID. That is what it told us. There were regional barriers. There were police everywhere. People were doing jobs that they normally would not do. The response was absolutely overwhelming. To this issue, there has been almost no response. The government says that it goes up north and meets the local people. The saddest thing about this situation in the Kimberley is that we have fantastic young people up there —

Hon Peter Foster: When was the last time you were in the Kimberley?

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: The last time I was in the Kimberley was in 2001. I lived and worked in the Kimberley for a significant time.

Hon Peter Foster: I asked: when was the last time?

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: It was about October 2021.

Hon Peter Foster interjected.

Hon JAMES HAYWARD: Nothing has changed. I still see the same stuff on the TV. The saddest thing is that there are young people up there who have incredible potential. If that potential could be tapped and used in a positive

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way, those young people would make an absolutely fantastic contribution to society in the future. One of the problems we have is that young people learn largely from their peer group and the situation around them. They are stuck in this repetitive cycle of offending. Unless there is an overwhelming government response, the situation will not change. The government can say all it likes—that it has been spending money and it sent a few more police up there—but the reality is that we need a much larger response.

The other reality, as we know, is that because of the changes to the way that members of this house will be elected, ultimately we will not have elected members to look after that part of the world, so those communities will be less represented in the future. No doubt, that is a strategy that the government put in place intentionally.

The removal of the cashless debit card will spell absolute disaster in these communities. We are at the absolute tipping point. We are already beyond what could be described as acceptable. If these things were happening in the suburbs of Perth, they would be stamped out. If people picked up a phone and rang 000, they would get a very good service, despite the challenges of the police force. It is much more difficult in the Kimberley. Given some of the crime figures, I wonder whether there is only so much a very limited police force can do. The reality is that charging people for everything they do is not always the best solution. Certainly in the Kimberley, I am sure that a lot of people who commit crimes are not charged because the police do not have the resources to chase everybody down, and they have to prioritise their work. Their cars are being rammed. They are being attacked. I hear endless stories of nurses being sent up north. They move into a house that looks a bit like Fort Knox, with bars on the windows and all the rest of it, and their houses get attacked repeatedly. They are such nervous wrecks that some of them turn around and go home after two weeks. These are the challenges. These communities need football coaches, small businesspeople and Aboriginal elders and leaders to work together. I agree that this is not a problem that the government solely needs to fix. The government needs to lead. The government is not leading; it is stepping back and saying that it is a community issue, it is too difficult and it cannot be fixed. The government is not doing enough. It needs to acknowledge that it is overwhelmed. That is the first step to being able to do something different.

I encourage the government to reconsider what it is doing in this space and acknowledge that it has failed, that it needs to do better and that young people's lives are on the line. These people expect the government to do better. As other members said, the government needs to lift its game in this space.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.