

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, PREVENTION ACHIEVEMENTS

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

With the latest round of police statistics revealing record decreases in crime across the State, can the minister please outline to the House what achievements are being made in preventing domestic violence?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for that very good question and for his continued support of policing. I informed the House last week that in the September quarter police statistics -

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The greatest reductions in crime are actually occurring in Kalgoorlie, so the member for Kalgoorlie should not bother saying anything. The fact of the matter -

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Kalgoorlie to order for the first time.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: As members would be aware, in the last quarter there has been a 55 per cent reduction in burglary in Kalgoorlie. Overall, there was a 15 per cent drop in crime right across Western Australia. That result contains some really significant falls; some of the most significant I have ever witnessed. Burglary right across the State is down some 28 per cent, and there has been a massive drop of 40 per cent for aggravated robbery. I thank the member for Joondalup for asking me this question. Interestingly, there appears to be an anomaly in that there is a 15 per cent rise in assaults and 28 per cent rise in threatening behaviour. I am advised that this indicates that the police are now apprehending far more people associated with these crimes, which, sadly, has a direct link with domestic violence.

Following the Gordon Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities, our Government committed to progressing a \$75 million response package; one of the most comprehensive packages ever undertaken. From a policing point of view, it has included the building of new police stations in remote communities, the completion by 16 officers of specialist training in child protection and family violence and the implementation of the victim and offender management system. All this means that we now have a far greater intelligence system to combat domestic violence, and more police officers arresting and charging more offenders with domestic violence offences. This has been possible because of our Government's fiscal management delivering balanced budgets over four years compared with the Opposition's economic debacle that the Treasurer and the Premier have pointed out very well today. Members opposite could not have dreamed of putting in the number of police and the resources into policing that we have put in while running those kinds of deficits. We have seen a 39 per cent increase in the police budget. I thank the Treasurer and the Premier for the responsible job they have done because, in addition to delivering those surpluses, they have added 39 per cent to the recurrent budget of the Police Service.

I want to highlight one of the greatest causes of domestic violence; that is, drinking. Many members will know that that is the case, and binge drinking is a particular problem. Sadly, despite our health campaigns and warnings about the dangers of drinking, it is a major social problem within the community. The fact of the matter is that binge drinking and drinking problems that lead to violence occur across all sectors of the community. If members read today's *Inside Cover*, they will see that a prominent journalist in this town was obviously engaged in a bit of binge drinking last Friday. He is now very sorry for it, he regrets that it occurred and has made an apology. Sadly though, 30 per cent of all road fatalities in this State involve drinking of some kind; it is a very serious issue. Binge drinking, like that done by the prominent journalist, can lead to assaults and people losing their memory. After the member for Kalgoorlie was involved in a five-day drinking binge in Bali, he could not remember to whom he had spoken.

Point of Order

Mr M.J. BIRNEY: Clearly, the incident to which the Minister for Police is referring took place for only four days, not five days.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Interestingly enough, the member was quoted in *Inside Cover* as saying that he could not even remember whether he had met with certain members of the Opposition who also happened to be in Bali. The interesting point here - perhaps members are not aware of it - is that the journalist in question has made an apology. I wonder whether the member for Kalgoorlie wants to make an apology for his drinking starting from about lunch time at Black Tom's bar with the said journalist and going on until they reached the Buddhabar Curry House in the member for Nedlands' electorate?

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I wonder whether the Buddhabar wants him back? Does the member for Nedlands want him in her electorate?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: The level of noise has got to a stage at which I suggest that the Minister for Police finish her answer very quickly.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: People in glasshouses shouldn't throw stones.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: That was an interesting interjection from the member for Carine. I hope that the member is not implying that I have ever been involved in binge drinking, because I have not. However, the member sitting next to her has. That member did not even come to Parliament on the Tuesday or Wednesday the following week, but he was able to drink his way through town from midday through to after midnight!