

CONFISCATION OF CRIMINAL PROPERTY

110. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Attorney General:

Organised crime is a serious and recently neglected threat to the state, including in my electorate of Morley. It was reported in the media on Sunday that the Attorney General is intending to utilise funds obtained from the confiscation of criminal property to further combat organised crime. Can the Attorney General provide additional detail about this government initiative?

Mr C.C. PORTER replied:

I thank the member for his question. As the member stated, that is my intention and I can provide some additional details of that intention. The background to this matter is that section 131 of the Criminal Property Confiscation Act allows for moneys to be allocated out of what has become colloquially known as the confiscations accounts. The act allows for moneys to be paid out in three broad circumstances. The first is for programs and activities aimed at decreasing drug use. The second is for services and assistance to victims of crime. I must state here that that is not compensation to victims of crime, which is covered by another act entirely. The third circumstance under section 131(2)(g) is for purposes in aid of law enforcement. It is my view, and that of many members of our party, that the allocation of moneys for purposes in aid of law enforcement has been that part of the allocations of the confiscation of proceeds of crime account that has been monumentally underdone. That has therefore not led to the expansion of the unexplained wealth provisions of this act, as we might have expected. There are guidelines about how these moneys should be handed out when they are given as community grants, including that no property or vehicles are to be purchased. By way of a memorandum of understanding with the Minister for Police and with a letter of intent to the Director of Public Prosecutions, I intend to increase the funding that goes to the police. It had been 2.8 per cent of the account. The police will get \$1.15 million each year for three years and the DPP will get \$3.6 million per year, which is an additional \$1 million more than the former Attorney General had allocated. There will also be a profit-sharing arrangement, if I can put it that way, when the account reaches above \$9 million. This brings a balance to the programs and to the way the moneys are allocated. Using the example of \$9 million, about \$4.75 million will be spent on law enforcement and \$4.25 million will be made available to community groups. I can see the member for Perth looking at me open-mouthed.

Mr J.N. Hyde: How much is in there? There's \$30 million in there.

Mr C.C. PORTER: There was \$13 million last year. There will be a profit-sharing arrangement on that basis if there is \$13 million in it next year. As the member knows —

Mr J.N. Hyde: There is \$30 million. How much is in there now?

Mr C.C. PORTER: That is not correct. The member is talking about the part that is frozen rather than that which is actually confiscated. It was \$13 million last year. The member for Perth raises an interesting point. He was in charge of the committee that gave away these moneys. It is interesting that he even pops his head up in the media because I had a look over some of the allocations he made, which were quite interesting. Remember that the moneys cannot be allocated for either property or vehicles. Someone got a bus, ladies and gentlemen—a bus! Moneys cannot be allocated for vehicles unless they are extremely large vehicles, ladies and gentlemen! Fences were built, ladies and gentlemen.

A government member interjected.

Mr C.C. PORTER: No bus shelters were built. Amateur theatre companies got money, ladies and gentlemen, as did community TV documentaries. The Shire of Collie received moneys for lights for the Collie River arboretum—that cutting edge law enforcement program! I did not even know what arboretum lights were; I had to look it up, ladies and gentlemen! What is more interesting is that this is about balance and need. We have a situation in this state in which there has been an attempted assassination pursuant to a suspected bkie war whereby eastern states' gangs are attempting to infiltrate this jurisdiction. What do we have from the member for Perth? We have the fighting of organised crime, one community theatre group at a time. The latest weapon in the fight against organised crime, ladies and gentlemen, is interpretive dance. Where to next? What members on this side of the house have again is a choice of how to fight organised crime. Over here, we have the serious application of law enforcement. The latest weapon from the member for Perth is the art of mime.