

POLICE STATIONS, HOURS OPEN

**199. Mrs C.L. EDWARDES to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:**

I refer the minister to the leaked budget note obtained by *The West Australian* this week that shows that the Government intends to open six 24-hour police stations in the metropolitan area.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the Kenwick Police Station, which was previously open for 24 hours a day, has recently been downgraded to open for only eight hours a day due to staffing shortages?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the Midland Police Station, which was previously open for 24 hours a day, has recently been downgraded to open for only 15 hours a day due to staffing shortages?
- (3) Is the minister aware that the Palmyra Police Station, which was previously open for 23 hours a day, has recently been downgraded to open for only eight hours a day?
- (4) Does the minister intend to open six new police stations or does she intend to reopen those stations that were forced to close as a result of chronic understaffing by the Labor Government?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:**

- (1)-(4) I have heard misleading questions in my time, but those questions would have to take the cake. The member is being cute. If she had asked the Police Service, it would have told her that a variety of police stations are 24-hour stations -

Mrs C.L. Edwardes: Is it incorrect? It is not, is it?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The questions are very misleading. The terminology the police used throughout the term of the previous Government was that those stations were all 24-hour stations. However, the fact is there is a lot of difference between a 24-hour police station that is staffed for 24 hours a day and one that is open for 24 hours a day. When the Opposition talks about 23 and 24 hours, it is talking about staffing. Many stations are staffed for 24 hours a day, but not all of them are open for 24 hours a day. When the State's budget is brought down, for the first time 24-hour-a-day stations will mean that the police stations are actually open for 24 hours a day. That is not what 24 hour-a-day stations meant when the Opposition was in government; it meant that stations were staffed for 24 hours but not necessarily open. We will guarantee for the first time that each metropolitan district will have a police station that will not only be staffed for 24 hours a day but also be open to the public for 24 hours a day. Other than key police stations like those at Midland, Fremantle, Cannington, Joondalup and Mirrabooka, metropolitan police stations are staffed for 24 hours, which is vastly in excess of their advertised opening hours. Officers who are working out of those police stations are on the beat and in patrol cars responding to crime. There is simply no sense in staffing every station throughout the metropolitan area, as would be the case under the Opposition's model, and have no officers in cars out in the community. It is far more sensible to have police officers walking the beat, on their bikes, on horses and in patrol cars, responding to people where crime occurs. How many crimes occur at a police station?

Interestingly enough, this question comes from somebody who was a cabinet minister in a Government that did not engage one extra police officer above attrition rates in its full four-year term. Police strength was 4 698 in each of its four years in office. When we go to the election we will have recruited over 1 000 police officers.

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

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

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Our Police Service has never had better staffing figures. We will have engaged over 1 000 additional police officers, who will have passed through the Police Academy during our term of government, which will deliver 250 police officers above the attrition rate. There is no comparison between the records of the two Governments. We go to the election with the best police ratio of any State in Australia.