

YOUTH CRIME — KIMBERLEY

**138. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to reports that Broome police have responded to a staggering 2 742 incidents since the beginning of 2024, as Broome and the Kimberley region continues to grapple with a youth crime crisis.

- (1) Does the minister believe that it is acceptable that residents in Broome have a 50 per cent chance of becoming a victim of property crime and a one-in-three chance of becoming a victim of a violent crime?
- (2) What additional measures will the minister put in place to ensure that these communities have an acceptable level of safety and security?

**The SPEAKER:** The very popular Minister for Police!

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, I have not excluded anyone from Parliament since I have been Speaker, but you could be a consideration!

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

- (1)–(2) Where did those claimed probabilities come from? I know where they came from. Come on, tell me.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please! Minister and the members, you are able to ask rhetorical questions, but when you are in government, you answer them.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I think they came from a website called RedSuburbs, the figures from which a journalist, a very junior journalist, has googled and put into a story in the *Broome Advertiser* as though they were fact, without verification.

That aside, I need to reflect on yet another attempt—not even an attempt—yet another attack on the Western Australia Police Force by the Liberal Party of Western Australia. Broome police do an extraordinary job. Superintendent Steve Thompson, who was formerly of the goldfields–Esperance region but is now in the Kimberley, is an incredible officer. He is the poster boy for our campaign to attract experienced overseas officers. He is an Irishman who came in the last wave of recruits. He and his wife loved Kalgoorlie, member for Kalgoorlie—interesting, but they did! They are the type of people who embed themselves in their community. He recently assumed the role that Craig Parkin, sadly, had to leave due to ill health. Superintendent Thompson assumed the role of district superintendent for the Kimberley and he has embedded himself in that community already.

The police there have been doing extraordinary things, as the member would have seen. There have been intercepts of sly grogging in recent times to focus on disrupting the flow of alcohol from Broome and Derby into dry communities in Halls Creek and Fitzroy. They have been handing out banned drinker orders as part of the reform that my predecessor, in the role of the Minister for Racing and Gaming, introduced last year to enable police to put hundreds of people on the banned drinkers register. The last I think I heard was that over 800 people are now on the banned drinkers register, which is now mandatory for packaged liquor outlets to comply with. The police are participating in, and contributing to, a range of other initiatives in tackling crime in Broome and over the entire Kimberley. They do an incredible job.

Part of what they are supported with is Operation Regional Shield, which, for some reason, the Leader of the Opposition does not like. Again, this is another criticism of the police. It is unreasonable criticism. It is an operational response. It has had an effect. It is doing good in assisting the local police getting additional assets—not only officers, but also other assets such as analysts and drones and any other police resources required to target the juvenile offending problem. But it does no good to anybody, particularly the people of Broome, for the Leader of the Opposition to come in here and make claims about failures of policing in Broome. Broome is a wonderful town. The Kimberley is a beautiful place. It is a jewel in the crown of our tourism product in many ways, and we should be proud of it, and we should be respectful and reflective when we engage in discussions around these matters.