

POLICE, LOST TIME DUE TO CHANGES IN COURT TIMES AND CANCELLATION OF CASES

720. Hon. C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

I refer the Minister to the answer to question on notice No. 538 and ask -

- (a) is the Minister aware that Police regard lost time, due to changes in court appearance times as a major drain on Police time and resources;
- (b) is the Minister aware that Police Services in other countries log lost time as a result of changes to court times and cancelled court cases;
- (c) is the Minister aware that there is a cost to the taxpayer for the lost man-hours involved in changes to court times and cancelled court cases;
- (d) will the Minister implement a review of Police man-hours lost as a result of changes to court times and cancelled court cases; and
- (e) will the Minister acknowledge that lost Police man-hours, as a result of changes to court times and cancelled court cases, result in less hours of actual Policing work?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

- (a)-(e) An Early Brief Allocation process has been implemented to identify when charges will not be proceeding, and to have the hearing date vacated accordingly. Unfortunately, both the Court and the Police Service Prosecutors are reliant on Defence Counsel receiving instructions from their client in sufficient time prior to the hearing date. This has been a long-standing issue and, in recognising this situation, the Department of Justice over-list the hearing courts at the Perth Court of Petty Sessions by one third to ensure the effective use of available resources. The Police Service is not aware of the overseas practice. Importantly, however, all attempts are made to ensure lost man-hours are kept to a minimum.