

FIREARM LICENCE APPLICATIONS — POLICE RESOURCES

**391. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Police:**

I refer to continued pressure for all agencies to deliver economic efficiencies and indications that government will be unable to meet its election promises in regard to increased police numbers.

- (1) Why, when section 18(8) of the Firearms Act 1973 makes express provision for an expedited approval for an addition of the same kind to a firearm licence, subject to the public interest, is this cost-cutting avenue not in practice?
- (2)
  - (a) Given that section 18(10) of the Firearms Act 1973 allows for notice in writing, what is the rationale for the current practice of WA police officers to personally serve unsuccessful firearm licence applications with the reasons for the decision; and
  - (b) what is the cost of this practice?

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Police responds as follows.

The member should note that the government announced today that its election commitment regarding increased police numbers has been fully funded in the 2013–14 budget.

- (1) The correct section being referred to is section 18(10) of the Firearms Act 1973. An original application is assessed on genuine reason and general need—see sections 11A and 11B of the Firearms Act 1973. There are no time frames for assessment of an application within the Firearms Act; however, WA Police has provided a grade of service at 60 days. In case of an addition to an existing licence, WA Police automatically takes the provisions of section 18(10) into account and has specifically set the grade of service at 30 days.

I am sorry, Mr President, but there is use of the Latin term “vide” in the response that I do not think quite works, and “pursuant to” would be the better translation in English. Therefore, the onus placed on WA Police pursuant to sections 11A and 11B of the Firearms Act 1973 still has to be complied with in that the genuine need and reason have to be justified. It is important to note that regardless of the target grade of service, an application for an additional firearm goes through a similar process as an application for an original firearm licence.

- (2)
  - (a) The correct section referred to in (2) should be section 18(8) of the Firearms Act 1973. When an applicant has been deemed unsuccessful, WA Police, in fairness to the applicant, serves a letter pursuant to section 11(8)(a) to provide a response within 28 days. The letter is personally served by a member of WA Police and so endorsed to verify the commencement of that 28-day period.
  - (b) The cost to provide the applicant with a fair and accountable response period is absorbed within the WA Police operational budget and this cost is not passed on to the customer. The actual cost is difficult to determine, depending on the rank of the officer, distances the officer is required to travel and administrative functions. Therefore, an actual cost cannot be accurately determined.