

CRIME STATISTICS - MARCH QUARTER

Statement by Minister for Police and Emergency Services

MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [9.09 am]: I rise to update the house on the crime statistics for the quarter ending March 2006. As members are aware, the WA Police release these statistics every quarter to monitor the effectiveness of different policing strategies and to measure the overall crime rates for the state. The statistics show a decrease in a number of offence categories, including robbery, burglary and motor vehicle theft, while clearance rates continue to rise. In this financial year to date there has been another 5.9 per cent decrease in the rate of burglary in this state. At the same time the clearance rate has risen by four per cent. These latest statistics are proof that more frontline police, more resources, equipment and the DNA program are having a profound impact on reducing burglary. Other highlights include a reduction in robbery offences of over 14 per cent while the clearance rate rose by nearly 25 per cent. In general terms, the overall number of reported offences has increased by 1.9 per cent in the financial year to date compared with the same period last financial year. This increase is not unexpected and actually highlights the success of police action in certain areas.

The increase can be attributed to two major factors. Firstly, the number of reported assaults has slightly increased since the introduction of new legislation in 2004 that addresses family and domestic violence, which encourages victims to report matters to police. More importantly the number of breach restraining orders has increased with the introduction of on-the-spot police orders. This means that more than ever before police are acting on antisocial behaviour. Secondly, there has been an increase in the number of reported drug trafficking offences. These offences are recorded only by the police themselves when uncovering offences. This clearly shows that the police have concentrated efforts in this area and have been highly successful in targeting the upper end of the illicit drug market.

Overall, the statistics presented this quarter show that the policing strategies and the government's commitment are continuing to have a profound effect on crime in this state. We have now committed more than \$260 million towards the biggest capital works program the WA Police has ever undertaken - 28 new facilities including police stations, police complexes, a new crime centre, lock-up and forensic building. The improvement in the incidence of burglary and its clearance rate are especially important. However, there is no room for complacency and continued and sustained efforts to reduce reported offences and improve clearance rates are still required.

I table the WA Police reported offence and clearance statistics for the March 2006 quarter.

[See paper 1478.]