

OFFICE OF THE STATE CORONER — CASELOAD

237. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

Thank you, President. I suspect there is an adviser somewhere in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development who has been waiting their entire career to answer just that question!

My question without notice is question 221 of Tuesday, 14 March, to I presume the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development representing the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Come in, spinner! It is question 221.

Hon Kyle McGinn: Got it!

Hon TJORN SIBMA: The question is regarding the operations at the Office of the State Coroner.

- (1) How many backlog cases are there presently?
- (2) Of this number in (1), how many are —
 - (a) backlog inquest cases;
 - (b) cases awaiting the completion of tasks by external entities; and
 - (c) cases pending analysis at the Coroner's Court before finalisation?
- (3) Of the total number of backlog cases, how many files are —
 - (a) up to and including 12 months old;
 - (b) between 12 and 24 months old;
 - (c) between 24 and 36 months old; and
 - (d) older than 36 months?

Hon KYLE MCGINN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I answer on behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General. The following answer has been provided to me by the Attorney General.

- (1) It is 1 145.
- (2) It is —
 - (a) 59;
 - (b) 808; and
 - (c) 278.
- (3)
 - (a) Cases up to 12 months are not backlog cases.
 - (b) It is 848.
 - (c) It is 182. This is a count of cases between 25 months and 36 months inclusive.
 - (d) It is 115. This is a count of cases that are 37 months and older.

The Office of the State Coroner continues to liaise closely and productively with external entities, including the Western Australia Police Force and the State Mortuary, with a view to identifying cases requiring progression. A number of coroner's investigators have been appointed to work with the WA police to assist with the preparation of police reports to the coroner. The Western Australia Police Force has allocated additional resources to support the concentrated review and progression of over 400 fast-tracked investigations between November and December 2022, whilst maintaining the ongoing work. Within the Coroner's Court, ongoing and active reviews are also maintained in respect of backlog files for which the court is responsible, being the matters when external entities have completed their functions. The Department of Justice continues to review the resources of the Coroner's Court.