

DNA SAMPLING

203. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Given the announced review of the legislation that relates to the use of DNA by police, how important is DNA sampling in the fight against crime in Western Australia?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for his question. Since the legislation was introduced in 2002, more than 98 000 DNA samples have been collected in Western Australia and more than 73 000 people are now profiled on the Western Australian DNA database. DNA has resulted in some 8 100 people in Western Australia being linked directly to crime scenes. Since 2005 we have shared this information with other states and internationally and, as a result, 193 connections have been made to people who have potentially been involved in a crime investigation in Western Australia or another state. Western Australia, along with Queensland, has led Australia in contributing to that national database. We are certainly seen as a leader in using the technology in our fight against crime. For property crime, about 5 000 DNA samples a year are collected from various crime scenes and a link has been formed from the DNA sample in more than 30 per cent of those cases that have been investigated. We can see that the use of DNA technology has been incredibly successful in Western Australia. Western Australia leads Australia in the use of DNA technology, and the message needs to be very clear. To the community, the message is that there is greater protection through the use of DNA technology and, to those involved in crime, the message is that we have a much better chance of getting leads on them and securing convictions. Those who are responsible for crime will pay the penalty through the very proactive role of our police, the resources we are giving them and, in particular, the modern technology that we have—an example of which is DNA technology.