

POLICE — FIREARMS LICENSING — RENEWAL

1308. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to section 9A(5) of the Firearms Act 1973, which states —

Where a licence is renewed ... within 3 months after, its expiry, it is deemed to have been renewed immediately after its expiry ...

This clause, referred to as the “grace period”, is not particularly well known among firearms holders. A firearm renewal fee is \$55 and the penalty for not paying within the grace period is an additional \$421.

- (1) Can the minister please advise whether she is aware that —
 - (a) a number of firearms licence holders have presented to Australia Post to renew licences that fall well within this grace period and have been told that it is not possible to renew an overdue licence;
 - (b) Australia Post personnel are informing licence holders that their only option is to wait for another reminder that will include an additional fine; and
 - (c) a number of firearms owners who have followed the advice have received a demand to surrender their firearms due to the grace period being exceeded?
- (2) Can the minister advise —
 - (a) how many firearms owners have been penalised by this incorrect advice that is being provided by Australia Post; and
 - (b) whether they will be reimbursed due to the erroneous information provided by Australia Post?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. This information has been provided to me by the Minister for Police. The Western Australia Police Force advises the following.

- (1)–(2) The Western Australia Police Force firearms licensing service has received a small number of inquiries on this issue over the last 12 months. If a complaint is raised, it is dealt with by the Western Australia Police Force firearms licensing service providing the correct advice to the Australia Post outlet concerned. If an issue has occurred and is found to be an error in advice provided by Australia Post, the Western Australia Police Force advises that a licence holder may contact the firearms licensing service for adjudication.