

CRIME, RAIL NETWORK

727. Mr O'GORMAN to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Can the minister inform the House about government initiatives to reduce crime on Perth's rail network?

Mrs ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for the question and his obvious interest in this important issue. I know that a better and safer train service will be a huge asset to his community of Joondalup.

I am very pleased to announce to the House that security operations on Perth's public rail system initiated by this Government have led to a significant reduction in minor offences committed in the city and Northbridge areas. In three joint operations by the Government's newly formed rail security force, officers from the police transit unit and the transit guards arrested 111 people over a three-week period. Those operations have had a positive impact on the incidence of crime not only in the city and Northbridge but also in Cannington and at Westfield Carousel.

Mrs Edwardes: Bus drivers would like those officers on their buses.

Mrs ROBERTS: One of the objectives of these operations was to prevent criminals using the public transport system to perpetrate and escape from the scene of their offences. Last weekend, the Premier and I visited the transit police unit's new premises on the concourse area of the Perth railway station. The unit's new accommodation will be a significant improvement on its current base at the Maylands Police Station. The transit unit has produced positive results since it came into operation last May: 283 people have been arrested and charged with 386 offences; 86 charges of misuse of drugs have been laid; and 418 liquor cautions and over 3 000 move-on notices have been issued. Through these operations and the ongoing presence of this rail security force, the community can now be far more confident to travel on the passenger rail system at any time of the day or night.

Like the Minister for Education yesterday, I have been looking at the opposition benches for some signs of improvement. Although I noticed the same cosmetic changes as he did, I noticed a couple more. I see that the member for Kalgoorlie, one of the contenders for the throne, has been moved to the front benches. That is a very good idea. If I were the Leader of the Opposition, I, too, would have him exactly where I could keep an eye on him. The Leader of the Opposition's only mistake was putting behind him the member who nearly knocked him out of the leadership this time last year by three votes. That member is now sitting behind and watching the Leader of the Opposition's back.