

CAR THEFTS AND BURGLARY AT RAILWAY STATIONS

1124. Mrs C.L. EDWARDES to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

I refer the minister to her refusal to answer a question without notice in the other place about the theft of cars at northern suburbs train stations, on the basis that -

... the extraction of the requested information would provide inconclusive results that could lead to misinterpretation.

- (1) Is the minister aware that her cabinet colleague the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has released information showing that one car is stolen every week from the Warwick and Whitfords train stations in the northern suburbs?
- (2) Are the police really stopping the minister from releasing these figures; and, if so, why is it that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure can be so open and accountable?
- (3) Will the minister now release the car theft figures for all northern suburbs train stations, or must I ask the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

(1)-(3) Quite simply, if I had those figures, I would table them.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: We hear some very ill-informed comments from members opposite. The fact of the matter is that the information systems left to us by the former Government do not provide that level of information.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the Leader of the Opposition for the second time, and the member for Kalgoorlie.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Unlike the former Government, we are now putting in place technological solutions that will enable that kind of information to be tracked in the future. Under the new incident management system that we are in the process of rolling out, there are various categories for both the location of crimes and the particular crimes involved. Under the new computerised system, when police officers put in a crime report they have to make a choice as to what the locality is. Some of the locality choices that I understand are prompts on the computer are things like bus stop/train station. That is one category. Another category is car parks. Under the new system, which provides a lot more detail than anything we could extract from members opposite during their time in government, police officers can give the information about the crime under the heading bus stop/train station or under the heading car parks, because one officer may key in car park as the location and another officer may key in bus stop/train station. Further, I am told by the Police Service that under that computerised system, Whitfords, which is one of the localities that members opposite have asked questions about, is not classed as a locality, because that train station car park actually covers two separate suburbs, so officers would specify what those suburbs are. If members opposite want me to provide information on the categories that we have, I am happy to provide it, or if they want to ask a more general question, I am happy to answer it. However, the Police Service has been unable to provide to me information on the exact number of car thefts and the like at those train station car parks. The Police Service does not keep information in that form. It keeps information in a form that is useful for it to target crime and criminals. If the Department for Planning and Infrastructure keeps statistics that the Police Service does not keep and it wants to release those figures -

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It used to keep those figures until December 2002.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: If it has other information, that is fine.

Several members interjected.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Members opposite are a bit cute, because never once did the member for Darling Range, when he was Minister for Police, table quarterly crime statistics reports. To the credit of the former member for Albany, he was the first to table quarterly reports.

Point of Order

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I believe I have been misrepresented by the minister. A great deal of information was made public by the previous Government, at least quarterly, about crime levels in Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: We were lucky to get information from the previous Government on police crime statistics on a yearly basis. The former member for Albany commenced the practice of routinely tabling quarterly reports in the Parliament on all crime statistics in all regions. I table that information quarterly. The information is also posted on the Western Australia Police Service web site. The information is very detailed and up to date.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Members have asked questions for which the Police Service is unable to provide answers to me.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call to order the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kalgoorlie.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I am not in a position to separate the crime statistics for bus stops from the crime statistics for train stations and then obtain a list of car parks and the like. I do not do that and the Police Service has not provided that information to me. In fact, the Police Service has never done it. There is far less detail available on individual crimes in localities under the old computer system than under the system this Government is putting in place. The new system will provide lots more detail and, for the first time, we will be able to target specific localities and crimes, as they are defined by the Police Service, in a way we have never been able to do before. That will be possible because of the way in which this Government has funded and supported the Police Service.