

**POLICE PORTFOLIO — GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

*Matter of Public Interest*

**THE SPEAKER (Mr M.W. Sutherland)** informed the Assembly that he was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.56 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Barnett government for its poor management of the police portfolio, including broken election promises and incompetent government leadership.

In recent days, the police portfolio in this state has been managed very poorly. It comes down to this minister. She has not done a good job. I was shocked the other night when I saw on television the Minister for Police roll her eyes at a major public meeting while addressing people who expressed concern about crime in their community. They have every right to be concerned about crime in their community. Then she attempted at that public meeting to shut down questioning from the member for Armadale, who was taking up issues on behalf of his community.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The minister attempted to shut down a member of this Parliament no less who was taking up issues on behalf of his community. She asked him to desist in front of a public meeting. This minister got what she deserved. The people at that meeting said that they wanted to hear from their local member of Parliament, and they did not like the member rolling her eyes at them when they expressed concern about crime in the community. We are concerned about crime in the community. We are concerned that the government has broken its promises in the police portfolio with impunity. We all recall the promise of 500 additional police officers made in the lead-up to the election. We know that that promise has not been delivered; indeed, the government is 100 short in that commitment, even considering that it redefined that commitment from 500 police officers to 350 police officers and 150 auxiliary officers. The government made a further commitment at the last election to provide another 400 police officers and 150 auxiliary police officers. That was an additional commitment even though the government has not delivered on its 2008 commitment. We asked a simple question about police cadets today, assuming that the minister would be across her portfolio. We asked the minister whether the status of police cadets will be changed. It was a simple question to the minister but she did not know what we were talking about. She said that the government wanted to expand the number of police cadets. I have some information for the minister. I have a letter from the police department dated 7 June. I will read it to the minister because I think she needs to know this.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** I think I've got it.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The minister did not know about it in question time. It is from Darian Ferguson, director of human resources, Western Australia Police, and it states —

The new Cadets will be employed as Police Auxiliary Officers (PAO) under common law contracts and appointed under the provisions of the *Police Act 1892*.

It further states —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** I said that. Check the *Hansard* tomorrow.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Police.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Minister for Police might be rude to the people of Armadale, but perhaps she can just let me finish the quote. The letter further states —

It will be the case that future Police Cadets will carry some powers such as those similar to PAO in property management.

*Point of Order*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The Leader of the Opposition was quoting from a formal piece of correspondence and I ask that he table that.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The Premier has been here for a long time and I would have thought he would have known that under the standing orders, ministers of the Crown are required to table official documents if they

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refer to them but that there is no such requirement on the opposition. In fact, there is no capacity for us to table a document other than to lay it on the table for the remainder of the day.

**The SPEAKER:** Only ministers can table a document but if the Leader of the Opposition wishes to lay it on the table, he can.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** This is a letter from the police department —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are people talking from behind the Leader of the Opposition and there is shouting across the chamber. Just let the Leader of the Opposition make his point.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** This letter basically says that police cadets will be converted to become police auxiliary officers. There is a proposal—in fact, it is more than a proposal; this is the policy of the government and this is what it will do. Let me read the criteria for a police cadet. The minimum prerequisites are for a police cadet to be between 16 and 18 years old. What do police auxiliary officers do? They are responsible for the admission, custody and release of detainees in Perth watch house and station-based lockups. Other duties include managing and handling drugs and firearms, processing property and exhibits, and a range of station support tasks. Under the government's policy, police cadets will become police auxiliary officers and be responsible for these sorts of tasks—handling drugs and firearms!

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** You're just making it up.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am not making this up. The Leader of the National Party does not know what day it is.

**Mr B.J. Grylls:** Lay the document on the table.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the National Party.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Minister for Police said she has the document. Did she mislead the house when she said that?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You're quoting from it.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Premier will see it soon enough. Good things come to those who wait.

Let us look at the other responsibilities of police auxiliary officers, which were put before the state's Industrial Relations Commission in 2007 regarding the sorts of property management duties undertaken by police auxiliary officers. They include transporting property, drugs and firearms from police facilities within the metropolitan area and ensuring that property, drugs and firearms are received, recorded, stored, maintained and released under the provisions of the relevant legislation. Another responsibility of police auxiliary officers is to assist with the processing and management of exhibits obtained from clandestine laboratories under the direction of a chemist and senior police officer. Under the government's policy, police cadets aged between 16 and 18 years old will be processing the contents of clandestine drug laboratories. That is what the government is doing. There will be children out there with responsibility for firearms, drugs and clandestine drug laboratories, according to the government's own policy documents. That is the way the government will manage the police in this state and the way it will meet the promises it made at the state election to provide additional police officers. When the government said it would provide another 150 police auxiliary officers, it was a simple trick to convert police cadets into police auxiliary officers. Bingo! There are the additional police auxiliary officers because of that simple accounting trick, but guess what? They happen to be children aged between 16 and 18 years old—or perhaps they will be up to 21. They will have responsibility for dealing with firearms, drugs and the contents of clandestine laboratories. That is why we do not think the minister is up to the job. The minister rolls her eyes at people in public forums and releases policies that she does not deliver on and she produces these sorts of initiatives to make kids aged between 16 and 18 years of age police auxiliary officers. They will be handling drugs, firearms and the contents of clandestine drug laboratories according to the government's own documents. When we asked the minister about that in question time, she did not know the first thing about it. All she knows is that she wants more police cadets. Guess what? So do we, but we do not want to convert them to become police auxiliary officers responsible for handling drugs, firearms and methamphetamine laboratories. We do not think that is an appropriate thing for kids to be doing and we do not think the government should get out of its election promises by using that simple accounting technique to get around it.

As we have said numerous times before, the minister should deliver on the government's promises. I do not believe the minister when she said in question time that there will be 80 police officers at Morley Police Station in 2014. The government's election promises were quite clear. As part of this year's budget, the work would be completed and 80 officers would be located at Morley Police Station. The minister has redefined that promise

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but I do not believe that 80 police officers will be there. I do not believe that the number of police officers at that station will increase from 29 or 30 police officers and another 50 officers will be added to that police station. The only way the government might be able to do that is if it closes Bayswater Police Station and hurts the people of that community to deliver on that promise. I note that promise was made to the people of Morley. In 2014, considering the minister said there will be an additional 50 police officers there, we will again ask the minister whether there will be 80 police officers at Morley Police Station. I guarantee that there will not be. The minister will try to get through today's media crisis by making that commitment to 2014 but we will hold the minister to account for what she said today and we will see whether those 80 police officers are there in 2014, because I do not believe they will be. I also think it is absolutely shameful what the minister is doing with the police cadets and the government's approach to convert them to police auxiliary officers.

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland)** [3.09 pm]: This government stands to be condemned for its broken promises in the area of policing and for its incompetent leadership, particularly the incompetence of the current Minister for Police. But I do not blame her; I blame the Premier, because he has appointed someone who is clearly not up to the job. Whatever we said about the member for Hillarys, it applies double to this member—maybe even triple or quadruple. There is no limit to the level of incompetence of this minister.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** He's starting to look good now!

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The former Minister for Police is starting to look brilliant.

Let us look quickly at a few issues—firstly, the Ballajura police station, something the Labor Party campaigned long and hard for over the past four years. Time and again the member for West Swan raised this issue by saying, “We need a new police station. Minister, will you commit to a new police station? We need more officers on the beat and in vehicles in the Ballajura region.” The answer of the minister was, “No, it is not needed.” Year after year that request was denied and neglected, and she was told it was not real. It was only when the Labor Party committed to building a police station in Ballajura that suddenly, in the heat of an election campaign, in a desperate and dirty trick to try to win the seat of West Swan, the government ultimately committed to it. The government has no credibility whatsoever when it comes to something like this.

Now a similar deception has been forced upon electors in the seat of Morley. The Morley Police Station is technically in the seat of Mt Lawley, but really the electors in both Mt Lawley and Morley have been duped here.

**The SPEAKER:** Could the member for Midland please pause Has the Minister for Local Government finished?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Today the minister says it will happen in 2014. What does 2014 mean? She will probably redefine that to the 2014–15 financial year, or something of that nature. The minister is on the record today as saying that the upgrade will be completed in 2014 and that there will be 80 officers in a station that today has only 30 officers allocated to it. The minister was not prepared to answer the question of the member for West Swan.

Let us look at a couple of things. Ian Britza, the member for Morley, says in this special 2013 state election update that Morley station will be upgraded to provide a major boost for police in fighting crime with 80 police officers based out of the upgraded Coode Street facilities. He said that the \$11.7 million project is part of the biggest ever \$1.2 billion WA police budget in 2012–13. The Liberal member for Morley was delighted with the news and said that he had been fighting for an increased police presence in those areas. Five years after he became the member for Morley there is not a single extra police officer at that station. In fact, there are fewer officers there today than when it was opened in 1998. So the member for Morley has been spectacularly unsuccessful and has been ignored by the Minister for Police. He clearly had the imprimatur, because I know that the member for Morley tries to be an honest man and he does not like to dupe people. He probably had an honest belief it would occur, but the person with the power to know, the Minister for Police, clearly duped him. This government duped him, because it had no intention of delivering on that promise and certainly no intention of delivering it on time.

That is not all. This is an advertisement in the local paper with a happy smiling photo of the member for Morley and Hon Donna Faragher outside the police station. This paid-for advertisement by the Liberal Party states —

The project is scheduled for completion in May 2013 ...

That is pretty clear. It is a broken promise, a lie to the people of Morley and, indeed, to the people of Mt Lawley if they were reading the same local paper. It is a clear and factual broken promise.

I now turn to the issue of police numbers. At the last election the Premier said that it would match the Labor Party's election commitment. Guess what, Premier? The Labor Party's commitment was for 500 police officers and 200 public servants by the end of June 2013. That was the commitment. The Premier went on television and

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said he would match that commitment, and deliver 500 additional police officers and 200 public servants. The fact is he broke that promise when he redefined it and said that the government was not going to recruit 500 police officers but rather 350 police officers and 150 auxiliary officers. That is not what he promised.

Now, 150 cheaper officers have been employed. WA went to the election four and a half years later 170 police officers short of the commitment from the election before. The government promised 500; it was short 170 in the first instance and 150 of those who were engaged were only auxiliary officers, not fully-fledged police officers as had been promised.

Let us fast forward to the recent election. The minister repeated again yesterday at the Police Union conference that over the next four years the government will deliver 720 officers. How can she say that? She says that because she is counting in the 170 that have not been delivered from the time before. The actual Liberal Party commitment in the Liberal Party's document is for 550 officers. In its press release it talks about 550, and of that 550, 150 are to be auxiliary officers. What does the house find out in the letter from Darian Ferguson which the Leader of the Opposition quoted from today? There is now a further sleight of hand. Last time we had the redefinition of "Actually, they are not all going to be fully-fledged police officers; 150 of them will be auxiliary officers." What the house is about to see now is that, rather than taking in cadets and calling them cadets, they will be called auxiliary officers. They will have the label "auxiliary officers" but do the work of a cadet, and they will be double-counted. Perhaps the minister would like to advise whether she is going to keep the full number of cadets she currently has and, in addition, deliver on the 150 auxiliary officers, because if she does not, that is a broken promise; a sleight of hand.

**Dr K.D. Hames** interjected.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The minister says she has read the letter. She can check it out. It is from 7 June 2013, written by Darian Ferguson.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** Give it to us then.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** What is the secret of the letter? Hand over the copy.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** If the minister is so incompetent that she cannot provide the government with proper briefing notes and proper documents from the department, do not ask me to do the minister's work. Get the minister to do some work. Perhaps then the Premier might know what is going on. How can the Premier expect to know what is going on when this minister is advising him?

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** What is so secret about this letter?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** Do your own homework, Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** What is so secretive?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The Premier can read it out.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** We haven't got a copy.

**The SPEAKER:** Premier!

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** The minister also said at the police union conference yesterday that she was going to help cut through red tape and get more officers on the front line. She is always cutting through red tape and helping the commissioner get more officers on the front line. The Labor Party had a real policy to get officers on the front line. It was called Frontline First. That has been redefined by this government and is called Frontline 2020, and it will cut through red tape and get more officers on the front line. The government had a good plan to do this. I hope the member for Hillarys does not mind, but I am going to use my iPad to quote from one of his ministerial statements.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** Was it a good one?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** It was a great one. It made a lot of sense. This one is dated 8 September 2010, nearly three years ago. It states—

Police to give on-the-spot fines for minor crimes

Wednesday, 8 September 2010.

People who commit minor criminal offences could be issued with an on-the-spot fine under new legislation introduced into State Parliament today.

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Police minister Rob Johnson said the Criminal Code Amendment (Infringement Notices) Bill 2010 proposed a new scheme into Western Australia whereby infringement notices could be issued for some Criminal Code offences.

Mr Johnson said under the new system, police could issue Criminal Penalty Infringement Notices (CPINs) for offences such as stealing (only in cases where the value of goods is less than \$500) and disorderly behaviour in public, which includes using offensive, insulting or threatening language or urinating.

“These CPINs will allow police to remain on frontline duties rather than having to go through a lengthy administrative process to bring an offender before the courts for relatively minor offences,” he said.

“It also saves the court system the cost of having to deal with relatively low-level crime, allowing the courts to reduce trial backlogs and focus on more serious criminal matters.

This is all about smarter and more effective law enforcement ensuring that our police officers are on the beat fighting crime and the court system is working more efficiently.

I could read more; it is fantastic—an excellent plan.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** It’s a pretty good press release.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** It is a great press release and a great plan. As far as I am aware, it is good legislation; legislation that was proclaimed back on 2 May 2011. The former Minister for Police—the real Minister for Police—ensured that the legislation got royal assent on 2 May 2011. It is more than two years ago. Why are these police not freed up to be on the frontline? Why are they still tied up with these minor offences? Why are they not issuing criminal penalty infringement notices? What has the minister been doing for the past year? This is her one year anniversary in the job. It was around the time of the police union conference last year that this Premier one day stood up and said what a brilliant job the member for Hillarys was doing and the next day announced he was sacking him and replacing him with a dud.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** It was the same day!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** This might be funny if it were not so serious. We have a minister who does not know up from down; she has taken no initiative in this portfolio; and she has sat on her hands and made statements as if they are somehow real and somehow will magically come true if she says, “I’m going to cut through red tape; I’m going to put more officers on the front line.” The government had a minister who put legislation in place; it had a minister who gave that legislation royal assent. Two years later nothing has happened. No police have been freed up for the front line and the courts are still clogged up with these processes. The incompetence of both this minister and the Premier’s government knows no bounds.

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police)** [3.22 pm]: Obviously, I am rising to speak against this motion. I would like to address some of the matters that have been raised. I will start with CPINs because that is the most recently raised issue. It is true the legislation went through this place in 2011 and was proclaimed, I believe, in 2012, although I might need to check that date. We were very clear at the time that the legislation needed to be proclaimed and the regulations needed to be sorted before we could source our information technology system, because this particular commitment for criminal penalty infringement notices—CPINs—comes with a requirement for a quite intensive IT systems upgrade for police. We always said that that systems upgrade would take three years to deliver and we are on target to deliver it mid-2014, which is exactly what we said we would do.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Over three years. You’ve been asleep at the wheel.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** We said at the time it would take three years to go out to tender. The legislation had to come through this place and we had to understand exactly how the legislation would look in its final form.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** It has been in place in New South Wales since 2007.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, you had a very good run. Will you give the minister a chance now? I call you to order for the second time.

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**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Sometimes legislation is amended, so it is not prudent for government departments to source an IT upgrade that will be consistent with legislation that is passed in this place until we understand that the legislation will be true to the bill that was presented to Parliament.

**Mr M. McGowan:** “The legislation will be true to the bill”! What does that even mean?

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** That project is completely on target. We believe that the CPINs IT upgrade will be ready for use in mid-2014.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Is it a funding problem? It can't take three years.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** It is fully funded. Let me repeat it once again: it is fully funded. We had to procure the IT program. The IT program now has to be written and matched into the existing skeleton we have for our IT programs for police. A lot of different IT systems have to match and talk to each other. This new system has to do that. It is not an off-the-shelf system that we can just purchase from Kmart; it has to be built specific to the legislation that was passed in this place. It has been fully funded and we are on target to have it ready for use by police officers in mid-2014, just as we said.

It is true that we are going to expand our cadet program. We will have 16-year-old police cadets, who, yes will be police auxiliary officers, but it is complete nonsense to assert that police cadets will be doing the work of fully sworn police auxiliary officers. The police cadets will be recruited under the Police Act 1892, so they will be subject to the same discipline provisions of the Police Act. They will have limited powers, and if members had the courage to read through that letter, it is very clear that the cadets will have limited powers under the police auxiliary legislation.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Such as property management. What is property management? That's what your own website says.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** No. The Leader of the Opposition has his own ideas about the police cadet program. I believe he has a letter of intention from the police to the public sector union saying that we want to move the police cadets from under the Public Sector Management Act to under the Police Act as police auxiliary officers. We are working on this. We want to expand our police cadet program so that we have more surety around our intake for our aggressive recruitment program. Young people may make a decision that they want to be police officers, but they may not be mature enough to take on that role, so police encourage them to become police cadets. While they are being embraced by the police family and getting to understand how police work, we can get a good understanding of whether they will be good police officers or whether perhaps they will not make it to become fully sworn police officers. The cadet program is a very good tool for us to train young people. We also get to hold onto them because if we turn them away when they are 15 or 16 and say, “No, you're too young to be police officers,” they may well embark on another career, and that could then take them away from us forever. We want to expand the cadet program to get more surety around our recruitment program because we need to recruit police officers and police auxiliary officers so that we can continue to meet our election commitments and we can continue to stay on target with our aggressive recruitment program.

I will put on the record some of this government's achievements in the police portfolio. Just last week I launched the new police boat, *Cygnets V*, a \$2.2 million commitment of this government —

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** — to ensure that our water police can go about effectively fighting marine crime in this state and be best equipped to perform sea rescues and to search for missing persons as they are tasked to do. Indeed, we need to task our police force in Western Australia to be equipped to intercept suspected illegal entry vessels that rock up at Geraldton unannounced. Our police need to be able to deal with these things. We have given them a \$2.2 million new boat to make sure they can do that.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the third time.

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**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** We put \$3.7 million into the 48 advance traffic management vehicles. We have bought a new police helicopter—\$20 million worth of high-tech equipment in the air to support what our police officers are doing on the ground.

I spoke earlier today about our out-of-control parties program, for which we equipped two prison transport vehicles to assist police in removing people from out-of-control gatherings. We are doubling the number of general-purpose police dogs, and that is fully funded. We have upgraded existing, or built new, police stations at Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Clarkson and Northbridge to the tune of \$109 million. After I have finished, I believe the Minister for Regional Development will talk about our \$94.5 million royalties for regions commitment to fund the regional radio network to replace the decrepit system left to us by the previous administration.

We have introduced legislation in this place to protect our police officers when they engage in emergency driving. We have introduced new penalties that are far harsher and a much greater deterrent for those who choose to evade police officers and to put our police officers and the community in danger. We have passed covert powers legislation in this place that better protects our undercover police officers. I mentioned the out-of-control parties legislation today during an answer in question time, so I will not go into that. We have passed the toughest anti-hoon legislation in the country, and that obliges police to impound vehicles. On 1 July, police officers in this state will get a 4.5 per cent pay rise as part of the last tranche of negotiations around the enterprise bargaining agreement. They are amongst the highest paid police officers in Australia—indeed, in the region. Members might be interested to know that police officers in New Zealand this year negotiated a one per cent pay rise. This Liberal–National government has proven time and time again that it is prepared to resource our police officers and fund them to do the job it expects them to do. It is prepared to pass brave legislation for the mandatory sentencing of offenders who spit at, bite and assault police officers. I will soon bring to this place legislation for the protection of police officers who may have been exposed to blood-borne viruses. I am hopeful that I will be able to bring that legislation to this place soon, so that police officers who may have been exposed to a blood-borne virus by an offender who bites them, spits at them or otherwise exchanges bodily fluids with them can have the prospect of the contraction of an infectious disease ruled out at the earliest opportunity.

I could go on—in fact, I will. I will talk about the previous government’s record. In 2007, the previous Labor government shut six country police stations.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. Papalia:** You’re talking about six years ago!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro!

**Dr A.D. Buti:** You are desperate now, aren’t you?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** How many police stations have we closed?

During the last election campaign we talked a lot about the commitments made. We committed to 550 additional police and police auxiliary officers. We committed \$67 million for station upgrades to put those police officers in.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** And, yes, we committed to build a Ballajura police station that will have police operating out of it 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That will be funded from our \$67 million capital upgrades program. Those opposite promised to build three police stations for \$27.5 million. I do not know what the opposition is planning to build, but I do not think it can be done for that price, because the sums I have before me show that \$12.5 million would be needed for that police station at Ballajura, which will leave the opposition’s Secret Harbour and Capel cousins pretty poorly off out of the \$27.5 million upgrade.

The opposition comes into this place and criticises us for what we are doing for Armadale. Out of my and the Commissioner of Police’s consultation with the community in Kelmscott in December last year —

**Dr A.D. Buti:** Your consultation with the community? What a joke!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale!

**Dr A.D. Buti:** There was an election campaign!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, you can have a chance to speak; it is now the minister’s chance to speak. I call you to order for the first time.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I spoke to the commissioner about what we could do in the south east metropolitan district, and Assistant Commissioner Gary Budge got onto the job and came up with Operation Carambola,

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which has been a tremendous success in the Armadale district, with more than 530 charges laid and 53 vehicles seized from people driving without authority and various other offences. Bench warrants have been issued, and police have been rounding up people who have re-offended. A number of people have been charged with drug offences, including the manufacture and supply of drugs. It has been a tremendous success. We have committed to putting additional police officers into Armadale station, and we are going to ensure that capital works funding is put towards the accommodation of those officers in Armadale Police Station. Members opposite say this is the biggest issue facing Armadale since the year dot, but no commitment was made by those opposite on anything to do with Armadale —

**Dr A.D. Buti:** Yes, there was! In the election we promised negotiation with the police commissioner for a 24/7 police station.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** Promised negotiation.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Yes; that was the commitment!

There was no commitment for additional officers and there was no commitment for a station upgrade. The commitment was that the opposition would commit to have a conversation with the commissioner about a possibility of increasing resources in Armadale. What a great, solid commitment! It is a really good, solid commitment from a committed local member who wants to see changes in his area. Well, I am glad this government delivered some improvements to Armadale, member for Armadale, because I am actually proud of the work our officers are doing in the south east metropolitan district in very difficult circumstances. The success of Operation Carambola is something I think people in this place will be talking about for quite some time. Indeed, the new local policing model we are looking at bringing in —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** How many permanent officers are they going to get?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** — will also mean some improvements in that area.

As to the purported broken election promise on Morley Police Station, the \$11.7 million west metropolitan district upgrade is still a commitment of this government. It still forms part of our budgeting process and the funding is still there.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. I do appreciate you trying to maintain order in this place in challenging circumstances.

The west metropolitan district upgrade involves the upgrade of three stations to a total of \$11.7 million. That will include upgrades, as we have spoken about, of Morley Police Station to improve the capacity of Morley from 30 police officers to 80 police officers. At Morley Police Station there will be improvements to the administration building, a new supervisor's office, new toilets and a new amenities room, and we will increase the availability of secure parking for those police officers. A total of 80 police officers will be housed at Morley Police Station.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** So they will be there next year; is that what you're saying?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** We expect that project to be completed in 2014. What happened with that project is that —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** But will it be completed then? You expected this to be done in 2013 before!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I call you to order for the third time. I am sure you would like to be in this chamber to witness the end of this debate.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** For the west metropolitan district upgrade, three station upgrades were grouped together and it went out to tender. It was a bad tender; the tender did not come back within the price range we thought was acceptable as an appropriate value-for-money spend of taxpayer money. That project has now gone back out to tender, and we are going to try again in a less heated market. We are committed to the project and we will do it; we have said we will complete it by 2014. That was the commitment of this government, and indeed I intend to see that through as part of that \$11.7 million commitment. These things have to be staged and managed very effectively; they do not happen in a vacuum. In the west metropolitan district, we have also upgraded Warwick Police Station to take an additional cohort of traffic officers and some additional detectives. We have upgraded Warwick Police Station to ensure that we can move police officers from some of the other stations in west metro into suitable accommodation while the upgrades of those other stations—Mirrabooka, Scarborough and

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Morley—are completed. It needs to be managed effectively, but it also needs to be managed within budget. We have to have a value-for-money spend of the taxpayer dollar. I am not going to overspend or spend outside of what I believe and what WA Police believe is the current economic environment and the current value for money in the market.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Minister, is the south metro rapid response group you promised at the election still going ahead?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I am really pleased that the member for Warnbro mentioned the expansion of the southern area regional operations group. At present we have 70 officers in the regional operations group—the group that supplements police resources in local stations when they are under pressure, particularly with things like out-of-control gatherings and those sorts of things. The south metro regional operations group is an additional 50 officers, and we are very, very close to finding a facility. In fact, I believe they will be based in Cannington, and we are currently doing the work on that location. Those officers will then be able to supplement all the resources for south metro—so, that would be south east metro, south metro and Peel. Instead of having to travel from Maylands, they will travel from Cannington, and they will be tasked out to various areas depending on what kind of operations and what programs are occurring in the different districts. They will be online soon. I expect to make an announcement about that once we have finalised all those details.

I would also like to clarify that with respect to the upgrade of the Morley Police Station, I answered a question on notice in this place on 15 May, making it very, very clear about what that commitment entailed and when we expected to deliver that commitment. I take my commitments in this place very seriously. As to the commitment around the Ballajura police station, it is true that I looked at all the statistics in Ballajura and the response times that our police officers were taking to attend incidents in Ballajura. I notice the member for Midland is waving an advertisement, which I think was from around 2011, referring to the west metro upgrade.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Last year.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I think I have explained the west metro upgrade and that program, and made it quite clear that we will have that Morley upgrade completed in 2014. But I digress. I was talking about the Ballajura police station. After the shopfront was closed, a period of time elapsed before I became the minister. Shortly after I became the minister, I asked for statistics on response times and reported crime and for general crime statistics in the Ballajura precinct. I was not very happy with what I saw. In response to what I saw, I spoke to the Commissioner of Police and we have made that commitment to build the Ballajura police station, which has been much talked about in this place and, I believe, has been the subject of another one of these similar motions by the opposition in the past.

I will continue with my commitment to engage with the community. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Armadale. It was my second tranche of community engagement in Armadale. I was there around the time of the election campaign.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The first was in the election campaign in December 2012, and people raised some very serious issues in that engagement. They raised issues about crime occurring on their front verges. I spoke to lots of people who were repeat victims of crime—people whose houses had been burgled more than five times, people who had had their dogs killed in the course of a burglary and people who had been assaulted in the course of a burglary. I hope to soon bring legislation to this place to deal more effectively with those sorts of offenders who break into people's homes, violently assault them in the process and cause them grievous bodily harm. As part of my consultation with the Armadale community, I have received positive feedback from those people. Indeed, after the community forum that I attended with the commissioner last Thursday night, a number of members of the Armadale community came up and thanked me. Some of those community members said that in the 40 years that they had lived in Armadale, no police minister had been brave enough to confront them, to listen to their views and to take the time to try to understand what they were talking about and what their issues were.

I make no secret of the fact that I did ask the member for Armadale to draw to a conclusion his statement that preceded a question. Other members of the community were very quick in coming to their point. Over 150 people were there. Lots of people had their hands up. Lots of members of the community wanted an opportunity —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, you can respond.

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**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Lots of the members of the community wanted the opportunity to speak to the commissioner and they wanted the opportunity to speak to the police minister. They did not want to listen to members of Parliament grandstanding; they wanted to hear members of the community raising their issues. They wanted to speak directly to the commissioner and to me. At the end of that community forum, not only did people come up and thank me for listening, but also they thanked me for my responses and they thanked the commissioner for strike force Carambola. I have since received a letter in my office congratulating me on the way the forum was run and for giving those people the opportunity to speak. I do not deny that there is an issue in Armadale.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** We have pressure points in Armadale; we have pressure points in Peel and a number of other districts. I will continue to engage with those communities because that is my job. I take those concerns of the community very seriously, and I will do whatever I need to do, as Minister for Police, to ensure that police are resourced to deliver the level of service that our community expects; and, if the level of service that the community expects is out of step with what I expect, we can then go back with police and try to work out where the gaps are and come up with a solution that is going to work for those communities, because they deserve to have a high standard of policing effort, just like every other citizen in Western Australia.

**MR B.J. GRYLLS (Pilbara — Minister for Regional Development)** [3.45 pm]: I looked forward to the opportunity to contribute to this debate. When I read the motion, I was shocked that the government had such a poor record in broken election promises and incompetent government leadership, as put by the opposition. But, quite clearly, the Minister for Police, in her 20 minutes, has been able to allay the fears of all in the chamber and make it very, very clear that once again this was a made-up motion by members opposite who could not think of what they were going to do today. So, they read the newspaper this morning, saw that the WA Police Union conference is on, and decided that they needed to come up with a motion against the police minister.

I was very interested to hear the police minister talk about the forum in Armadale. I was not there, but I think the minister is exactly right. She went out and spoke to the community. She allowed community members to come along. One hundred and fifty people —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Yes.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** — came along to the forum, and she is exactly right. I am pretty sure that those people went to the forum to hear from the minister and the police commissioner—people who can make a difference to policing in Armadale. I think the minister is quite right: when 150 people came to listen to the minister, they probably did not come —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the second time. Leader of the National Party, speak through the Chair. Member for Armadale, you can make a speech in due course.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

So, well done, Minister for Police, for going out to Armadale and confronting the issues, and for making herself and the commissioner available for the community to ask direct questions of her and of the Commissioner of Police. It seems that that is the way she conducts herself as a minister and that is why she is a very good minister, and that is why the government will not support this motion today.

When the opposition talks about broken promises and a lack of leadership, the things that I think about when it comes to regional Western Australia are housing, salaries and safety.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** We can debate that as well when the member wants to.

Housing, salaries and safety are the three things that always came up with me from a country policing point of view. This government has an outstanding record on housing, salaries and safety. Four hundred new houses were built through the Government Regional Officers' Housing program, of which 60 went directly to police officers. There were 60 brand-new houses for police officers in regional Western Australia.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

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**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I am very happy to talk about the free rent, because instead of free rent, we offered district allowance upgrades. Those district allowance upgrades were worth about four times what free rent would have provided. For many people, district allowances were four times better than what they would have got with free rent, and free rent also did not help the vast majority of officers in regional Western Australia who already had free rent. So, offering free rent as an incentive to go to a regional location, when those people already had free rent, seemed as though it was not going to work. District allowances were provided to every officer, and that is what this government has done. My understanding, from my notes, is that \$6.2 million has gone direct to police in regional areas.

*Point of Order*

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** I think the Leader of the National Party has misled the house. I believe I heard him say that the majority of officers in country regions had free rent. If that is the case, he should correct the record of the house.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr B.J. GRYLLS:** I state again that many, many officers in regional Western Australia already receive free rent. The opposition's claim that it will give police officers free rent when they already get free rent is not much of an incentive. That is why we made the decision to provide a district allowance. The sum of \$6.2 million was provided to those police officers, making a substantial improvement to their salaries. The most important thing I want to talk about in the couple of minutes I have left is the police radio network—the linkage for those police officers back to base. When the Labor Party was in government there was recognition that the radio network was completely dysfunctional and was not working, but members opposite made the decision to fix the metro area and ignore regional Western Australia. Officers could not contact back to base because of the dilapidated radio network. There was no election promise from the Labor Party to fix that. It abandoned regional police officers and said, "Bad luck, you won't have a network that works." The Liberal–National government has put \$95 million into the regional radio network. That now means officers have linkages back to their offices. Kalgoorlie is already online. Geraldton comes online in August this year, Albany in September this year and Pilbara in early 2014. For the first time it will allow regional officers to link safely back to their head office when they are out on the beat or out on patrol, making a substantial improvement to their safety in the workplace. That is something the previous Labor government completely ignored.

On safety, a big tick for the Liberal–National government; on district allowances, a big tick for the Liberal–National government; and on new houses for country officers, a big tick for the Liberal–National government. That is why this motion put forward by the opposition cannot be sustained. I am glad that the Minister for Police had the opportunity to let the member for Midland know what is happening in policing because clearly there is a big gap in the member for Midland's knowledge and what is happening on the ground in regional WA.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale)** [3.51 pm]: I also rise to contribute to this matter of public interest condemning the Barnett government's police portfolio, broken election promises and incompetent leadership. The Minister for Police mentioned the Armadale forum last week. I really was not going to go on about that, but I have a few comments to make. A question was asked about police cadets during question time. My understanding is that the Minister for Police stated that they would not become auxiliary officers, but in her contribution to this motion she said that they will become auxiliary officers.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** No; I said we are moving them from the public sector award into the Police Act.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Will they become auxiliary officers?

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Yes, with limited powers.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** But the minister did not say that during question time.

The Minister for Police mentioned she has had extensive consultation in the Armadale region. She talked about a December meeting. That December meeting was nothing but a campaign meeting. It was held in the local RSL hall. A select number of people were invited. There were posters of the Liberal candidate in the room—that is what it was. It was nothing to do with consulting the general community. Do not come in here, minister, and tell us there was general community consultation in Armadale in December. It was an election campaign, which is fine—she can have an election campaign; but that is what it was. Do not try to mislead this house by saying there was extensive consultation with the local community, because there was not. She did not attend the public rally; she had other commitments—that is fair enough. But the Minister for Police was on 6PR radio the day before saying that everything is fine in Armadale; there are no problems in Armadale and the police presence in

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Armadale is fine. That was even though, in the December meeting, the minister said she understood the problems in Armadale, but about six weeks ago the situation in Armadale, as far as the minister was concerned, was that there were no problems at all.

Operation Carambola was then announced, which is a very good initiative but is only temporary. We want something more permanent. The minister failed to attend the public forum held in the Armadale Town Hall attended by about 550 people. A meeting was held last week in the Evelyn Gribble Community Centre with the Commissioner of Police. She made a statement that I was grandstanding. That is funny—does the minister want me to read out what she said to a number of people after the meeting? After the meeting the minister said that she took responsibility. She said that she should never have interrupted me because I was the local member making points to the police commissioner. I was not actually speaking to the minister; I was speaking to the police commissioner. I was two minutes into my contribution. The first speaker, as the minister knows, spoke for about 12 to 14 minutes. The minister told people that she was wrong, she should not have interrupted and that she knew she had made a big mistake. Do not come into this house and say that I was grandstanding and that many people came up after the meeting to tell the minister what a great job she did! I bet if we went back to that hall today and took a vote, the minister might be outnumbered. The Minister for Police knows she was outnumbered on that day. People said that the minister was so rude to interrupt when I was making a statement and a contribution on behalf of them. I was asking the police commissioner questions. The police commissioner got up and said, “Yes, member, you have made a number of questions and I will answer them now.” The Minister for Police is out of her depth. She is a joke in my Armadale community and she is a joke in Western Australia!

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe — Premier)** [3.55 pm]: This government has a very strong record on policing. That has been reflected in the overall fall in crime rates.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** Fall in crime rates!

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** They are down nine per cent.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** They are down nine per cent; that is right.

Also in hotspots; the work done in Northbridge has proved to be effective. There have been a range of things—sport and recreation has been involved, youth programs, police obviously, also the City of Perth has been supportive. There is a tangible result. Armadale has been talked about. Clearly, there are all sorts of social issues in Armadale, but it is not the only place. Armadale has a high crime rate and a high number of offenders come from Armadale into other parts of the city. This government, to its credit, is prepared to take on those issues. Well done to the Minister for Police for going out there. It was a pretty heated meeting—that is fine; people were upset about crime and the disruption to their lives, and antisocial behaviour. The minister went out there and took questions in a question and answer session. The member for Armadale decided to turn a question and answer session into a speech by himself! That was his choice. No wonder people got upset.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members! Premier, just talk to the motion through the Chair, please.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Mr Speaker —

**Dr A.D. Buti:** You were not there; do not mislead the house!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I do not think there is any doubt the member made a speech instead of asking a question! I heard it replayed on the radio the next day.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** You would never come out!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** You will be very surprised.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** That is what you said three years ago.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** He won't come to Albany.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I have been to Albany about five times in the past 12 months.

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** We did not win the seat.

The Leader of the Opposition started the debate by waving around a piece of paper; a letter that he refused to make public. I am just curious —

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** He refused to. I am just curious as to why he did not.

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**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** It is interesting, is it not?

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** The minister will not table the letter.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** Time!

**The SPEAKER:** Time, Premier.

[Government time expired.]

**MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition)** [3.57 pm] — in reply: The government confirmed during that debate that we were right; that is, that police cadets are being converted to become police auxiliary officers. That means, according to the government's own correspondence—which I will lay on the table—that those police cadets will have powers similar to those of a police auxiliary officer in property management. The property management responsibilities —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, this is supposed to be a debate.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I do not actually think that children of the age of 16 to 18 in our community should have responsibilities for managing firearms and drugs. That is what this government's policy is. That is what this document shows. That is what a police auxiliary officer does. The government's own correspondence says this; I will quote it to the Premier, because he does not listen —

It will be the case that future Police Cadets will carry some police powers such as those similar to PAO —

That is police auxiliary officer —

in property management.

What sort of property do they manage? They manage the handling of drugs and firearms, and the processing of property and exhibits, and they do a range of support tasks. We cannot use children in these roles.

On top of that, I know exactly what the government will be saying. The government will be saying that it has delivered on its commitment to provide 150 additional police auxiliary officers. But it will be doing that by converting cadets into that role. The government will get around that promise by saying, "We have now met our commitment, because we have converted these cadets into that role."

But we will continue to remind the people of Western Australia that we have police stations that do not have notepads and other stationery, and we have police stations in which children are being used in the role of police auxiliary officers. That is the way the government is getting through its commitments. This is from correspondence that I have received from various parties in the police force. The information that we have is based on the government's own website. These are questions that neither the Premier nor the Minister for Police answered during the debate. What is more, the minister did not even seem to be aware that this issue was going on.

In relation to the member for Armadale, I am proud of a member who goes out there and takes up issues on behalf of his community. The member for Armadale should not have a minister be rude to him in a public forum. But I can tell members that the member for Armadale can handle any of these ministers any day.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

**Extract from *Hansard***  
[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 25 June 2013]  
p2043f-2056a

Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Colin Barnett; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Brendon Grylls;  
Dr Tony Buti

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Ayes (18)

Ms L.L. Baker  
Dr A.D. Buti  
Mr R.H. Cook  
Ms J. Farrer  
Ms J.M. Freeman

Mr W.J. Johnston  
Mr F.M. Logan  
Mr M. McGowan  
Ms S.F. McGurk  
Mr M.P. Murray

Mr P. Papalia  
Mrs M.H. Roberts  
Ms R. Saffioti  
Mr C.J. Tallentire  
Mr P.C. Tinley

Mr P.B. Watson  
Mr B.S. Wyatt  
Mr D.A. Templeman (*Teller*)

Noes (34)

Mr P. Abetz  
Mr F.A. Alban  
Mr C.J. Barnett  
Mr I.C. Blayney  
Mr I.M. Britza  
Mr T.R. Buswell  
Mr G.M. Castrilli  
Mr V.A. Catania  
Mr M.J. Cowper

Mr J.H.D. Day  
Ms W.M. Duncan  
Ms E. Evangel  
Mrs G.J. Godfrey  
Mr B.J. Grylls  
Dr K.D. Hames  
Mrs L.M. Harvey  
Mr C.D. Hatton  
Mr A.P. Jacob

Dr G.G. Jacobs  
Mr R.F. Johnson  
Mr R.S. Love  
Mr W.R. Marmion  
Mr J.E. McGrath  
Mr P.T. Miles  
Ms A.R. Mitchell  
Mr N.W. Morton  
Dr M.D. Nahan

Mr D.C. Nalder  
Mr J. Norberger  
Mr D.T. Redman  
Mr A.J. Simpson  
Mr M.H. Taylor  
Mr T.K. Waldron  
Mr A. Krsticevic (*Teller*)

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Pairs

Mr D.J. Kelly  
Ms M.M. Quirk  
Mr J.R. Quigley

Ms M.J. Davies  
Mr J.M. Francis  
Mr S.K. L'Estrange

Question thus negatived.