

POLICE — MOBILE PHONES

44. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to ensuring that WA's police officers have the resources they need to help keep the community safe. Can the minister update the house on the roll-out of mobile phones to Western Australian police? Can the minister advise the house how this is helping police in the valuable work they do to protect our community?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Girrawheen for her excellent question and for her support of WA police officers, which has been ongoing for many years, particularly her support of those police officers who have been injured in the course of their duties. Despite the harsh economic terms we inherited from the Barnett–Harvey government, we have had an unparalleled investment in the Western Australia Police Force and we have been able to provide our police with the resources they have needed for some years—resources that were denied to them by the former government. I refer to things like the rollout of stab-proof vests, which obviously aid our officers by improving their safety, and body-worn cameras are something they have been asking for for years. Last year I announced that we would roll out mobile phones to police officers. That announcement was disparaged by the Leader of the Opposition in November last year. She said, “They don't need mobile phones. What use will they be?” Let me tell members how fast we have managed to roll them out. We have rolled out some 3 800 mobile phones in the metropolitan area and in regional areas, and they have been very welcomed. They have a range of applications based on those phones that are proving to be invaluable in the field. They can perform ID checks and risk assessments. They can search the police database and they enhance officer safety in the field. I will give one example. This is a \$34 million-plus investment in our police by our government.

I heard recently that Senior Constable Cartmill in the Kimberley and police dog Hank were responding to a situation about 40 kilometres from Broome near a roadhouse. They were in thick scrub and it was dark—it was night—and he was calling for assistance. He was able to use the OneForce locator app on his mobile phone. There were no landmarks or other things that would normally occur to identify where he was. Using that OneForce locator on his phone, two police cars were able to pull up in a very short period and identify exactly where he and the dog were. It was of phenomenal assistance. I will highlight what Senior Constable Cartmill said. He said —

They literally just tracked me on the app and pulled up next to me in the middle of nowhere. It provided a real sense of security as I've previously had major issues achieving exactly this when I'm out with the dog.

So thank you for helping to make my workplace safer and easier to operate in. It is appreciated.

I note too that recently a Swiss tourist in the Karijini National Park was able to be located, partly because she had a personal locator beacon, but also when police had that on a map, they went out on location, could not see her in the first instance, turned on their location device on their phones and from that it was able to be readily ascertained that they were about 500 metres away from the lost tourist. Those phones are proving to be invaluable in all kinds of ways in the field. They are enhancing officer safety and they have been welcomed by all police officers who have received them in our state.