

POLICE — COURT SITTINGS

585. Dr A.D. BUTI to the Minister for Police:

I refer to revelations yesterday that the new Magistrates Court inside the new \$93 million Perth police centre is sitting idle for six and a half days a week.

- (1) Can the Minister for Police confirm that the court sits only on Saturday morning?
- (2) If this is the case, how does this reconcile with the government's election commitment that a Liberal government will make sure that offenders can be dealt with more rapidly?
- (3) Given the election pledge that courts will be sitting nights and on Sunday, is this not just another broken promise?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Armadale for this question.

- (1)–(3) I understand that the court at the new police complex sits at the same times as the courts sat at the old East Perth station, so there has not been any reduction in the number of court days available through that police complex. What we are in the process of doing at the moment in the new \$93 million Northbridge police facility is to have the courts open seven days a week. Indeed, the member for Armadale is correct to mention the government's commitments for night court and the additional sitting days over weekends. That will come online in due course.

Dr A.D. Buti: When?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am trying to answer the member for Armadale's question. We are in the process at the moment of negotiating contracts for the custodial and security requirements of those courts, and the Attorney General is working with the Chief Justice to ensure that magistrates are available to work in the courts. It is taking time to work through those contractual arrangements, and when those contractual arrangements are complete, over the four-year period of this government, we will meet all our election commitments regarding that facility.