

METHAMPHETAMINE

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment of more than \$100 million to tackling the scourge of methamphetamine in our community, including 100 extra police officers for the meth border force. Can the minister update the house on how effective the WA Police Force has been in continuing to stop the supply of drugs into our community?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Armadale for his excellent question and for his support of police, certainly within his community and broadly within Western Australia. As members of this house are all too painfully aware, we saw the meth problem grow substantially in Western Australia from 2009 to 2016. During that period, when the previous government was in office, we saw quite a meth crisis develop. We know that occurred for a variety of reasons. One was the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's wastewater drug monitoring program, which peaked in 2016, with Perth having the highest consumption of meth of any city in Australia. It grew substantially over that period because of the results from Drug Use Monitoring in Australia showing the percentage of Perth watch house detainees who tested positive to drugs, in particular, methamphetamine. In 2009, that was 20 per cent of detainees. By 2016, it was up to 60 per cent of detainees. Commensurate with that huge increase in meth use, we also saw a 37 per cent increase in crime in 2016. It is harder to measure the damage that has done to individuals and families.

Since coming to government, we have tackled this issue head on. The member for Armadale would be aware that the first piece of legislation we introduced to this house dealt with meth traffickers. We put in place a life sentence for offenders. We have also allocated \$101.4 million towards engaging an additional 100 police officers and 20 specialist staff. We have put in place a meth truck and new specialist enforcement vans for regional operations and equipped our police with modern devices such as Tru Narc. We are seeing the results of that. The member asked what we have seen recently. People are only too well aware that over the past couple of years, police have seized over 1.5 tonnes of methamphetamine, which is huge. In the last couple of weeks, some members may have seen a significant meth seizure, with coordinated search warrants across Dianella, Morley and Gosnells, seizing 32.5 kilograms of meth, almost five kilograms of MDMA, plus a significant quantity of cash. That was as a result of a joint investigation between WA police and the ACIC. Police say that given the amount of meth and MDMA that were part of that seizure, they are confident that an established criminal network has been disrupted.

The other significant incident that people may have seen in the media in the past week or so is the successful extradition by WA police of a 57-year-old UK national who failed to appear in court on significant drug-related charges. He was arrested by Australian Border Force officers as he tried to escape on a jetski across the Torres Strait. He will now face court in Western Australia. Those people who are found guilty of trafficking meth face the very real prospect of a life sentence in Western Australia.