

POLICE NUMBERS

**713. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:**

- (1) What strategies have been put in place to disguise from the Western Australian public that Western Australia Police is almost 500 operational officers under strength and the numbers leaving are much higher than the 30 per month admitted in official WA Police statistics?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the Commissioner of Police is -
  - (a) offering leave without pay to officers who want to resign; and
  - (b) trying to bring back some officers who have resigned to work just one shift per fortnight?
- (3) Can the minister confirm that this strategy to hold onto absent and part-time officers artificially inflates the reported official strength of the police force to try to hide the massive police shortage in WA?
- (4) Will the minister concede that such a tactic is extremely deceptive?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:**

- (1)-(4) The Leader of the Opposition in seeking to besmirch the reputation of WA Police is true to form. The fact is that we have a fine body of men and women -

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! I call the member for Murray to order for the first time.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** - who do an incredibly important job and are committed to it. In some cases things have not gone well and they need to do it better. I totally reject the Leader of the Opposition's attempt to undermine their standing by way of a slur in his question.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** What slur?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** In the last four years in which the Leader of the Opposition was a minister no money was provided for even one additional police officer.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Tell me what the slur is?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It is in the Leader of the Opposition's question. It suggested that somehow the Commissioner of Police is saying things that are not true.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** It is a fact.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Where is the fact? Where is the evidence that suggests more than 30 police officers are resigning each month?

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** I will provide you with the evidence. What will you do about the 500 operational officers under strength in WA Police? Why does the commissioner have to go to these lengths to get numbers back to protect you?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The Leader of the Opposition said that more than 30 police have been resigning each month; that is, more than the official figures. Where is the Leader of the Opposition's evidence?

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** It is much higher than 30 per month.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Where is the evidence?

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** We will deliver the evidence. Why don't you answer the question?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The Leader of the Opposition does not have any evidence. He makes these accusations against the police and the police commissioner, but he has absolutely no evidence. This demonstrates the despicable level to which the leader of the Liberal Party will go in this house. He cannot back up his claim that there are more police leaving than stated in the official figures provided to me by the Commissioner of Police. It is an attack on the commissioner and WA Police. The Leader of the Opposition is an absolute disgrace to call himself the leader of a political party in this state. He is attacking the police. They deliver the figures. I do not put the figures out. I know that it is this government that provided the money for 250 additional police in its first term in office and they are now out on patrol. This government provided the police with the wherewithal for 350 police in this term in government and it is well on track to meeting that. In addition, with Frontline First, another 400 police have been moved from desk jobs to the front line. This government is delivering front-line policing in this state and that is the reason that all the major crime figures are decreasing. It has occurred because of active policing. It is absolutely despicable of the Leader of the Opposition to make false assertions against the police and the commissioner.

