

Mr Murray Cowper; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Sue Walker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr John McGrath; Mr Mick Murray

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**Division 57: Police Service, \$783 882 000 -**

Dr S.C. Thomas, Chairman.

Mr J.C. Kobelke, Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Dr K.J. O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police.

Mr M.W. Lampard, Deputy Commissioner, Operations.

Ms J. Harrison-Ward, Executive Director.

Mr R.S. Reid, Manager, Policy, Office of Crime Prevention.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have on my list the members for Murray, Hillarys, Nedlands, Wagin, Victoria Park and Swan Hills. I give the call to the member for Murray.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to the first dot point under "Major Achievements For 2005-06" on page 997 that states -

Recruited 80 additional police officers as part of meeting the Government's commitment to 350 extra police officers over four years. By June 2006, 70 positions will have been civilianised as part of the progress towards achieving an additional 160 police staff.

My information is that nowhere near 80 additional police officers have been recruited so far this year. I think the net gain last year was about 45. In the first quarter of this year, 90 officers were recruited, with an attrition rate of 99, which is a negative of nine. On my understanding, until the first quarter of this year, there had been a net gain of something like 35 or 36 recruits. This is contrary to the 80 that appears in this section. By way of supplementary information, I would like to get a breakdown of how that recruitment occurs, in comparison with the attrition rate in the police service.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Clearly, there are challenges for the police in meeting that target. With an unemployment rate of 3.9 per cent, which is a record low, with the way in which our economy is travelling and perhaps overheating in some areas, with a huge demand for labour and with police being highly skilled and trained people, their skills can be in demand. Therefore, that affects the attrition rate. It also means that the pool of people who are likely to come into the police service has perhaps shrunk because of the level of activity in the labour market. To answer the member's question, we must be careful, because there have been these assertions, based on rumour, and they have been proved wrong so often in the past. We delivered on the undertaking that we made in our first term of government to recruit extra police. I am very confident that, again, we will deliver in this term. There might be slippage on a monthly basis, or one year might be a bit under and another might be over, but the service, with the leadership of the commissioner, has been very creative. It has looked to sourcing people from overseas. I will ask the commissioner in a moment to give more detail, because he is the expert in this and I am not. Previously, the arrangements were such that it was not attractive for officers who had left the service to come back into the service. Changing the rules has meant that a small number of officers who had left the police service to pursue other careers or whatever have decided that it was actually nicer in the police service than it is outside, and they are also coming back into the service. I ask the commissioner to give a bit more detail on how we are going with that recruitment program.

[2.40 pm]

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** I think it is fair to say that, with these sorts of recruiting programs, there will be slippage and there will be gains. As of January this year, we were 43 under strength. That was our total variance. We are predicting that by August this year we will be at full strength. Part of that is being fuelled by the extra recruiting from overseas. We had 27 officers start on Monday, who are all from the United Kingdom. They are doing a shortened course. Another course will come in next month. There are 210 potentially in the pool who can be recruited. They have already been put into the pool because they have been interviewed, and those people can be used to top up any attrition. Our attrition has been high. I think attrition has been, on average, 29 a month, which is double what it used to be. However, it is also fair to say that there is a labour shortage. I have just come back today from the commissioners' conference in Melbourne, and all the states and territories that have a major resource industry, such as Queensland, the Northern Territory and WA, have the same problem. Victoria and New South Wales do not, because they do not have the same demand for labour. However, in WA the issue is the labour supply. We have been looking very closely at the reasons that police officers leave the police service here, and the difference between normal attrition and current attrition is almost always that people are going to another job or another industry. That does put pressure on us, but we have the overseas recruiting strategy in place, and I am told that by August this year, we will be on target with our projected strength in recruiting the extra 350.

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**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The minister spoke about the previous term of government, saying that the government delivered on its promise. When I went back and tried to establish whether that was the case, the figures were very rubbery. In this case, I ask the minister to be open and transparent and to keep a tally, for all to see, of where we are going with police numbers, because, frankly, given the track record of the government, I have serious doubts that this will be fulfilled.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Is there a specific question?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am happy to respond to that with specific information. In terms of full-time equivalents - and this fits in with our budget papers - in 2004-05, the actual number of FTEs was 6 196. For 2005-06, the year that still has just over a month to run, it is estimated that the actual number of FTEs will be 6 340, and for the year to come, 2006-07, which this budget is about, the estimated number of FTEs is 6 612. Of course, that is sworn officers plus other staff.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** That is precisely my point. The minister is talking about FTEs, not sworn police officers. The commitment by the government was for 350 additional police officers, not FTEs. We are talking about police officers on the ground - those who hit the ground running and are doing the job.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am happy to provide, by way of supplementary information, the number of sworn officers, actual and expected, for those same three periods. The commissioner is willing to add a bit as well.

*[Supplementary Information No B37.]*

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** We have changed the way we report to government in that we know, for argument's sake, that by June 2006, the current authorised FTE police will be 5 183. Then we update that. Therefore, in line with our projected recruitment of 350 and above, we update that and advise government as that target is reached. There are clear reporting protocols, and it is clearly set out in papers that we send to government.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I thank the commissioner for that. The problem that the opposition has is trying to establish that. Although there may be a clear reporting process to the government, the only way in which one can establish what the numbers are is to grab hold of the police annual reports and try to determine them through good old nose-to-the-wheel sort of stuff. For the sake of being over-transparent, I ask the government to provide those figures and be open, so that we can keep track of them, working off the same page, as it were.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I have already given an undertaking to provide supplementary information. If the member or other members want additional information, they need to put it to me and I will provide that information.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I thank the minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the member for Hillarys have a question?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes, it is in line with that one, and the comments that the minister and the commissioner made, particularly about officers coming from the UK and Ireland. I believe the majority are coming from the UK. However, I want to know what are the costs of bringing those officers over here and training them, and what guarantees are in place by way of contracts? After their time at the academy, they will stay for at least two years to fulfil what I believe is the right obligation. I know it is done in South Australia, but I understand they are not signed up for any specific time in Western Australia. Can the minister confirm that or elaborate on that?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will ask the commissioner to assist in answering that question.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** I can give the member some detail. The UK police officers who were recruited in South Australia were recruited under something called the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has particular protocols for people who come into the country, and they have to stay for so long and provide so much service. Because Perth itself is not covered by the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, the agreement we have with DIMIA is called a labour agreement. The labour agreement simply requires that these people, once they are offered a job, make themselves available for that job in Western Australia. We do not pay for their relocation. They have to do that themselves. However, conversely, there is no requirement for them to stay for any length of time with the police service. Therefore, they can come to the state, they can be police officers and then they can move on. They are treated the same as any other recruit. That explains the arrangements with DIMIA. They are the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs' arrangements; they are not mine, and they differ between states based on the sort of coverage DIMIA has in each state or the sorts of protocols it has.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The particular visa used would impose conditions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am starting to run out of questions at this point. I will allow a couple more, but we are pushing the boundaries. Member for Hillarys?

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**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I am the shadow police minister, Mr Chairman.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am cutting you some slack.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The commissioner's answer was in accord with my understanding of the situation. However, surely there is a problem, and I ask for either the minister's or the commissioner's comments and views on this. Some of these people come across from the UK. There is a cost in training them while they are here for three months - I think it is a three-month period; it is a shortened time. However, there is nothing to stop them, after doing that for a month, three months or six months and the government spending that money on training them, from joining the Australian Federal Police, another state police force or the mining companies, which are snitching some of our police officers at the moment. Can we not sign them up to a contract so that we know we will get at least two years' value for money out of these officers?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** That is a matter that has to be considered, but there are swings and roundabouts. The fact is that if they come to Western Australia and are skilled and trained and move into another job, WA Police certainly misses out, which is not our objective, but the state does not. There is the broader view. The issue is that a range of different visas are available. One needs to judge what will serve the purpose of WA Police in acquiring the quality officers it is seeking and hoping to retain. What I am alluding to is that visas can be employer sponsored. The employer may commit to meeting the costs of relocating, and the visas can be issued then. If those people cease employment with that employer, their visas expire and they must leave the country.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That does not happen in this case.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** No.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** We do not need to know about that then.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am saying that that does not necessarily assist in attracting the best possible officers. A whole range of factors go into making a judgment about which form of visa and what form of assistance are likely to prove of greatest benefit to WA Police. That is a discussion we can have. I accept that the current arrangement is, in the judgment of the police, the best way to attract and retain valuable officers. I do not know whether following the example of the opposition spokesperson for police, who has been a valuable import to this state to do that job -

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I do not mind the minister carrying on a bit more now! However, the minister did not answer the question. The crux of the question was: why do we not get them to sign a contract to stay in WA Police for at least two years? I know all about the visas.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will ask the commissioner if he wishes to add to my comments. However, the point I was making did answer the question; that is, the agency or the employer makes a decision about which form of visa it wishes to use, because there is a range of different visas. The thing is that the decision has been made by the police that this is an appropriate visa form, rather than one which goes with a contract and which ties them to a fixed term of employment.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Which visa form are we talking about?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I do not know the numbers off the top of my head.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Does the commissioner know what visa form we are talking about? I understand these people come over here and they become permanent residents the day they land.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will the commissioner make any comments?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will ask the commissioner to assist in answering.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** I can assist. As I said before, in Western Australia the police officers are brought out under a labour agreement. That is a DIMIA agreement, and the visa is associated with that labour agreement. I am not clear on the details of the visa. South Australia uses the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, so the visa has different requirements and different waiting times or different staying times in Australia.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Two years.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** We have to treat incoming police officers, whether they come from the UK, from the eastern states or from anywhere else in the world - some of these officers have come from mainland Europe - the same as we treat our local recruits. We do not sign them up to a contract. In fact, under the Police Act and current enterprise bargaining agreement arrangements, we cannot do that anyway, so there is no scope to sign up these people to contracts under our current employment arrangements. There is really no reason to treat them any differently from any other recruit. However, the real crux of the matter is that South Australia has been doing this for 18 months, and it has had a 10 per cent loss. It recruited initially 80 police officers. It lost eight,

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and they were people who decided to go back to the UK because of family arrangements and being away from extended family. If South Australia is an indication, as I think it would be, the scheme has been relatively successful, and we have a loss when we recruit locally anyway.

[2.50 pm]

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will add some information that will perhaps help to highlight the complexity of visas and the advantages of them. The commissioner spoke of South Australia using the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme visa. That is a visa developed by the commonwealth to try to get migrants to go to areas where it is hard to get labour, and it is normally expected that it will be to a region. South Australia has got around that by making the whole state of South Australia “the region”. However, New South Wales, for instance, does not want more migrants going to Sydney, so it has specified regions to which it wants those people to go. However, they are all the details involved in particular forms of commonwealth visas.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I refer to page 1011. The number of FTEs has increased by 416, or 6.7 per cent, between 2004-05 and 2006-07. Pages 1011 and 1013 show respectively that employee costs increased by 11.3 per cent, according to the income statement, and by 8.4 per cent on a cash flow basis. From that, the result is that the employee costs per FTE are increasing at 2.3 per cent per annum on an accrual basis and less than one per cent per annum on a cash basis. Can the minister explain how the increases in cost for these employees have been kept so low over the two years?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am sorry; can the member repeat that? To make sure I have it clear, which line was he looking at on page 1011, and which year?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** It is in relation to the FTEs.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It does not match what I have drawn from the figures, so can the member be clear on exactly which figures he is speaking about?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I think it is at the bottom of the page in relation to full-time equivalents.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Is the member referring to note (c)?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Under the table are notes (a), (b), (c) and (d). The member is referring to note (c).

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** On which figures was the member basing his assumption of increased costs?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I am basing it on the answer that the minister gave earlier when he said that the numbers were 6 196 for 2004-05, I think it was, and 6 340. These are figures that the minister quoted earlier. The change over two years equals 6.7 per cent. However, as I explained, the employee costs for FTEs are increasing at 2.3 per cent per annum. Does the minister agree with that or not?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am looking at the item “Employee benefits expenses” in the very top line. The figure goes from \$395 million to \$440 million. That is an increase of considerably more than 10 per cent.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** It is 11.3 per cent.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Yes, for two years.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** On page 1013, the cash flow for employees over two years is a figure of \$402 606 for employee benefits.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There are a number of factors here. We will see whether this answer is adequate for the member, because it is a complex issue.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes, it is.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Clearly, that represents an increased number of police. On top of that, there are the EBA outcomes, which increased wages, but it is also coming off a higher base. The member might recall that we did have an issue - I think we had to do something special in the Parliament - because last year there were 27 paydays, which inflated the wages. That was in 2004-05. I think about every 11 years we end up with 27 pays in a year, and that distorts the figures, because we must pay out that money in the year. Therefore, the total budget for salaries is basically one-twenty-sixth higher than would be expected. It is about four per cent higher.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** These results are less than the wage agreements. Can the minister explain how the employee cost increases have been kept so low over the two years?

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**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The member is taking the percentage increase from the 2004-05 year. The 2004-05 year was a high base, because there were 27 pays instead of the normal 26. There was roughly a four per cent increase in the salary budget in that year due just to the extra pay in that particular year.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will read the minister's answer in *Hansard*. I will check it with my accountant.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** I refer on page 993 under "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators" to the line "Outcome: A safer and more secure community." I want to raise an issue with the minister and ask the question after. Currently two police prosecutors prosecute for the Kimberley Magistrates Court circuit, and their area covers the following locations: Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek-Balgo, Warmun, Kununurra, Wyndham, Kalumburu, Oombulgurri, Eagle Bay, One Arm Point and Bidyadanga. The number of matters in those courts that these two police prosecutors had to deal with in 2005 were: Broome, 3 145; Derby, 792; Fitzroy Crossing, 1 237; Halls Creek-Balgo, 1 805; Kununurra, 2 223; Wyndham, 334; Oombulgari, 55; and Kalumburu 69. There has been no change in work over the past three years according to my figures, which come from an accurate source. I want to raise with the minister the question of whether the minister and the commissioner will review the number of police prosecutors in that circuit area. The police are very concerned that they are unable to appeal numerous decisions of Magistrate Bloemen, who is currently there and who has been recently appointed as an acting magistrate, in relation to four areas: grossly inadequate sentences imposed for domestic violence assaults; assaults against police and public officers, including police officers; failure to imprison people on breaches of suspended terms of imprisonment; and failure to commit serious matters to the District Court. My first question is: why are they not appealing? It is because two police prosecutors deal with thousands of matters in one year and are simply under-resourced to prepare an appeal within 21 days.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** You tried this on with the Attorney General last night and that got you nowhere.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** It is a very valid point.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, members, but can we get to the question?

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** The question is: will the commissioner review the number of police prosecutors there so that they are able to properly appeal decisions from the current magistrate?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Clearly I do not have those figures before me.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** I am happy to provide them.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** However, they do suggest that that is a matter that needs to be looked at. I will, following the meeting, ask the commissioner whether he will assess that matter and advise me if he believes that it is a concern.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** I thank the minister.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I refer to page 1005 and the section headed "Service 7: Traffic Law Enforcement and Management". In particular I refer to the total cost of service, \$139 698 000, and the appropriation for delivering a service, \$133 816 000. Given that there is a high amount of death and injury on country roads, how much of that appropriation for delivery of service is allocated to regional Western Australia? In the strategies listed under service 7, was the force considering any particular priority for country WA in relation to the high number of deaths and bad accidents there?

[3.00 pm]

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I appreciate the question from the member. We are all well aware of the much higher proportion of serious and fatal crashes on country roads, which relates to a whole range of issues. Clearly country people spend a lot more time driving, but we also know that there is, unfortunately, a bit of slackness or unwillingness in the culture in some sectors of the rural community to do the basic things. People do not buckle up as regularly as they should; we all know that. Because of the long distances travelled, perhaps fatigue is not taken as seriously as it should. There are real issues that we need to address there, but that does not go to the specific points that the member raised, and I ask Assistant Commissioner Lampard to provide more specific details in answer to the question.

**Mr M.W. Lampard:** A lot of effort has been put into regional Western Australia. Quite proportionally we are very concerned about the high rate of deaths on country roads. When we compare the number of vehicles proportionally in the country with the number of vehicles in the metro area, it is even a worse picture. We have focused on a number of things. We are very concerned about the number of single-vehicle crashes that occur in regional Western Australia. Clearly people are running off the roads by getting caught on the edge of the road in the gravel and invariably rolling over. We find that alcohol is not a major contributor to that; it is more about fatigue. In particular, as the minister said, people not wearing seatbelts concerns us most. We are therefore focusing on a number of issues: seatbelts, fatigue, the roadworthiness of vehicles and, of course, we still struggle

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to educate regional Western Australian drivers that the speed limits are there to protect lives and other road users.

With the introduction of our new highway patrols we very much want to send a strong, visible message to the community. We have introduced the new highway patrol vehicles, which are very clearly and brightly marked. We have developed traffic units now in all country districts. We always had that capacity but we have recognised that we really need specialist traffic people out in all districts. In particular in relation to the member's electorate, the great southern, we now have dedicated officers who will have further training to specialise in all aspects of traffic work. We are therefore looking at major crash investigations, heavy-haulage issues because, of course, they are an issue for the member's particular area, and the south west. We have actually put a lot of emphasis on regional WA. The commissioner and I have spoken at length about this. We are working with the Office of Road Safety looking at education programs specifically to target country drivers. We have seen a significant increase in the amount of traffic contacts. That is not necessarily infringements, but just traffic contacts with drivers in regional Western Australia to get that clear message out about their driving behaviour. We are still concerned about the road toll. People are continuing to die in the country, but we have changed very much the way we offer traffic services to regional WA.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Just a quick question, Mr Chairman. Is that happening in all districts on a gradual basis, or is it just in the great southern?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I would have to ask the deputy commissioner to help with that.

**Mr M.W. Lampard:** Yes, we have rolled that out through the north of the state right down to the great southern. We have eight country districts and we have re-organised the new traffic infrastructure to allow traffic units, not just at the major centres, but in fact in the member's area at Narrogin, Bunbury and Katanning, as well as major centres where we can actually put in a cell of dedicated traffic officers.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** May I ask a supplementary question, please, on that?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for South Perth has a further question on that.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The minister might ask the commissioner to answer this question. It has been suggested to me that we would be better going back to the former Roads and Traffic Authority, which separated the traffic police from the general police. I would like to hear the commissioner's view on that and how the new system is working.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** That is a decision for government, and government is not anticipating that we would do that. However, often we can achieve a similar arrangement through a different means. I will ask the commissioner to comment in a moment because I think the member will find that the commissioner, who has been in the job for just over two years now, has brought in a range of reforms. The Frontline First policy was a key part of that. My understanding is that part of his restructuring has addressed the underlying issue that the member is getting at. Commissioner O'Callaghan has actually restructured somewhat to get a higher profile for road functions. The commissioner might like to make comment.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** The former RTA was an experiment of the government in the mid to late 1970s and the early 1980s. During the 1990s, under the Delta Communications and Information Technology reforms, most of what was centralised expertise in the agency was devolved to the districts for the districts to take care of so that the districts had a mass of police officers that they could send out onto the street, and they gave some traffic duties and some other types of duties. I think what we have seen over the years since then is an inconsistent approach to traffic management across the state. Although some districts did it very well, other districts did not do it as well. One of the first policies that I put in place under the Frontline First scenario was to recentralise the control of some of those units. Therefore, we have recentralised some of the traffic units so that we now have a traffic enforcement group that is held centrally. However, the districts still need the flexibility sometimes to be able, when there is a problem such as the riots or noisy parties that have occurred, to divert people from traffic duties to other duties. We need that flexibility to provide a total service for the community of Perth, rather than isolating people who have only traffic skills and who can focus only on one aspect. In fact, I am very encouraged by the figures we have about centralising some of these and having more control over their training and having high visibility. The results we are getting are sensational. For argument's sake, the traffic enforcement group is turning over about 1 000 infringements a week. They were not being done before, so we are seeing a halfway house, I suppose, between the old RTA strategy and the full devolution strategy. Something in between I think is a good outcome for the community.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I refer the minister to page 990. This is probably an operational question and may be more appropriate for the deputy commissioner or commissioner. The third bullet point states -

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Impact of significant variations in commodity and other prices e.g. fuel, on the maintenance of police presence in the community.

Can the minister tell the committee whether the current price of fuel or anticipated price of fuel is having more of an effect on the police presence or police activity in the regions, or is it affecting police behaviour in terms of response or police patrols?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Again, I will ask the commissioner to answer that issue in terms of whether it is having any effect. However, clearly fuel prices have been a problem. I am advised they have increased by approximately 25 to 30 per cent in the past 18 months. That has direct implications for the police, as they have some 1 400 vehicles travelling 50 million kilometres per annum; therefore, clearly, fuel costs are a component. There are also a lot of knock-on costs that also affect the police. However, I will ask the commissioner to comment on whether this has meant any change in operations or had an effect on the efficiency of the police.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** The answer is that it does not have an impact on operational front-line work. Firstly, government has provided an extra \$5 million specifically to pay for the increasing fuel bill. We also are working on set minimum standards for patrol hours. At the moment a number of scenarios are happening in districts like west metro, where we are trying to establish a minimum number of patrol hours and we keep to that. Therefore, the \$5 million actually tops up the extra fuel costs to the agencies so that we can maintain the patrols. However, I think the other thing we have to do is look internally within the police itself to divert funding from non-operational matters to operational matters so that those patrols can be maintained. There will, therefore, be no decrease in front-line patrol hours, and that will be evident in the outcomes.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I refer the minister to "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 989 and the sixth dot point relating to enhancing traffic safety around schools. I had a problem in my electorate, as the minister might know. Upper Swan Primary School is located on Great Northern Highway. First of all I thank the police service for cooperating with the parents and citizens association, the school and me for the patrols and traffic monitoring around that area. However, generally, what is the police service doing to enhance traffic safety around schools, particularly schools on the national highway?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** This is an issue of which we are very conscious. We are responding in terms of this budget as is the police service itself in the priority it is giving to this issue. The state traffic coordination enforcement division has launched targeted speed camera enforcement operations in school zones. The data I have with me, although it will not make much sense reading it out - clearly shows that over a three-year period when cameras were in operation there was a fairly large hit rate of infringements for driving over the speed limit. It has been identified as an area to which we really do need to give attention. Funding has been provided in this budget for four additional speed cameras and associated processing resources; that is, additional traffic wardens for servicing those crossings at schools. Therefore, it is an area that has been targeted with new initiatives in this budget.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I have a further brief question to the minister. Does the police service have any variable speed signs to give to schools as an education device to reduce speed?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Signage is an issue for Main Roads. The police are not involved in physically putting out the signs, although obviously the police advice to Main Roads can sometimes be important.

[3.10 pm]

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I have a further question in relation to school zones. Do the police favour cameras at school zones ahead of flashing lights, which the public say to us would be a better solution? Rather than penalise people, it would warn people. I would like to hear the minister's opinion on that, please.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There is a role for both. An assessment is made in given circumstances as to which method is likely to be most effective. However, an additional factor to take into account is the importance of the approach being across the whole state so that people become more conscious of the need to not speed, of the need to maintain their speed within the limit, and, when road circumstances require, of the need to drive well below the speed limit. We really must get the message through a lot more clearly, not only for people driving through school zones, but also generally, that speeding puts individuals and others at a much higher risk of a serious accident or fatality. Therefore, the approach to schools, although primarily we look at what is best at a given school, is also part of the larger agenda to educate people and make the community much more aware of the fact that drivers are not allowed to speed, as it breaks the law and puts them and others in situations of increased jeopardy.

**Mr S.R. HILL:** I refer the minister to page 997 and the dog squad at the last dot point. Will the minister advise the progress of the dog squad expansion and where these dogs will be used?

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**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I thank the member for that question. I know that he has been a strong advocate for having police dogs in Geraldton.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is question number four, by the way, just in case the Chairman loses track. It is a list of dorothis!

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** Where are they?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The member for Geraldton has been raising this matter for some time.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** One of his pet issues.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Absolutely!

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There is a range of aspects to this issue. The police will be acquiring dogs for explosives detection. An officer undertook special training in London in September 2005. Those dogs will be metropolitan based but they will be used in the regions. There are also seven dogs for country deployment. As members are quite keen to know, I can say that one of those will be in Geraldton and two in Kalgoorlie. It is anticipated that they will be there by July this year. There will also be two in Albany, another one for Geraldton and one for Bunbury in 2007-08. There are also four dogs for general purpose expansion in the metropolitan area but, because of the extension of the program, there is also the issue of providing for the breeding program and a kennel manager to back up the supply of dogs for that program. The assistant commissioner will make an extra comment.

**Mr M.W. Lampard:** I wanted to pass on that one of the British officers, who has come out as part of the intake, is a dog handler and we are negotiating for him to bring his dog as well.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to pages 1000 and 1001, and references to counter-terrorism capabilities and the specific initiative to -

Establish a multi-agency facility which will include Police Service Water Police Unit in the North West to help with counter terrorism and the protection of critical infrastructure.

Is the Western Australian government taking up the role of protecting infrastructure requirements in the north west, as opposed to it being a federal government responsibility? What will the contingent of that unit comprise?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There is agreement at the heads of government level for dealing with the terrorism threat. There is a memorandum of understanding, to which the commissioner will be a signatory, along with the other commissioners in other states and the federal government, on how the states will work cooperatively. The commonwealth takes the primary responsibility for offshore infrastructure, but there will be crossover areas. I can advise that Western Australia has 194 facilities that have been officially classified as critical infrastructure, including 25 per cent of the nation's facilities classified as nationally vital, and more than 17 per cent of those classified as major. This includes 41 offshore platforms, most of which are within the state jurisdiction, and 22 security-regulated ports. There is therefore a major issue there. The police will be committing a vessel to the north west in the middle of this year. This requires the procurement of an additional water police vessel, which is expected to be delivered in the middle of this year at a cost of more than \$800 000.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Will it be based in Dampier? How many full-time equivalent staff will be located at that new facility?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There will be 10 water police officers deployed in the north west.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Hillarys. I note that the minister had a written answer for the member for Murray as well.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Yes.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Yes. Do not tell me the minister is writing dorothy dixers to the member for Murray now, for goodness sake! I refer to point (j) on page 994. Can the minister advise the average time in hours that a police officer spends processing individuals taken into custody for offences, including shoplifting, assault and armed robbery; the processing time, including the time spent taking personal details, logging property, taking DNA samples, photographing etc?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** That question is very wide-reaching.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I would be happy to receive the answer by way of supplementary information.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The issue relates to the new procedures being brought in.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Is that to do with the red-tape committee?



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**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Let me be clear on the question.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I read it quickly because I am trying to get in as many questions as I can in the next 40 minutes, which is not a lot of time.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** In terms of how police actually handle those -

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I have asked for the average time that a police officer spends processing individuals taken into custody for offences, including shoplifting, assault and armed robbery; the processing time, including the time spent taking personal details, logging property, taking DNA samples, photographing, etc. I have been told that it can take up to six hours to process a shoplifter, which means that two officers are off the road for six hours.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** He did not really say yes or no.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Welcome, member for Collie-Wellington!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The voice of experience is all I have.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If members want to get through the questions, they should let the minister answer.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I am trying to.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The issue is that this is an area of developing -

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Will you bring him to order, please?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I actually requested the police to have a taser here in case the member for Hillarys got out of hand!

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Not a problem!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** We might need it somewhere else!

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Absolutely!

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The police are giving a deal of attention to those procedures. I will ask the commissioner whether he can be more specific in answering the question the member asked.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** The time it takes to process an offender, obviously, depends on the type of offence that the offender is being charged with. The average time was 34 minutes about six months ago. With changes to the custody system and the incident management system, we have managed to bring it back to an average of 19 minutes, although some concerns continue to be raised about the custody system. We are looking at that further, as we are looking at the incident management process. There is a major review currently inside the police, which is called the arrest to brief process review. What we want to do is look at all the elements and stages between the time someone is arrested to the time the brief is submitted, to see whether it can be streamlined. There are some early indications that some policy changes and system changes will improve that further.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I have a further question. Is that known as the red-tape committee?

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** There is no such thing as a red-tape committee any more.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** A colloquial term.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** It is looking at issues in the police to see whether we can streamline some of our processes and policies.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Who are the people doing that?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** In answering the question, Commissioner O'Callaghan has clearly been talking about the Frontline First policy. That is not just a slogan; it is about making sure the police are out in the community and actually meeting the needs of general policing and a range of activities behind that in implementing efficiencies. The commissioner has indicated the improvements of some aspects of that, but it is an ongoing program of making sure that the police are as effective as possible, and that effectiveness means being efficient whenever they can.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I have a further question on that, and I am responding to what the minister said now. He has talked about the Frontline First policy and the number of police officers that are out in the community patrolling and responding to crime and violent attacks, and so on and so forth. Can the minister tell me how many police officers on average are out in the community - in other words, out of the police stations - and on the

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roads responding to criminal acts both during daytime and night-time? If the minister cannot give that information to me now, I am happy to have it as supplementary information.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There are many different forms of operations, whether it be patrolling the beat, traffic patrolling or detectives conducting investigations - they are out on the street as well. I think the question is too broad and vague to give specific numbers.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Let me rephrase it then. Can the minister give us the number of uniformed officers that are out in the community during daytime hours and a separate number during night-time hours carrying out front-line duties, responding to crime and patrolling the streets? I am not talking about detectives; I am talking about uniformed officers.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The problem with doing that is that there is such a great variability. The police perhaps expect that there will be greater activity on weekends. The fight on Thursday night created a range of issues.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Obviously there were not enough officers on duty that night, but can the minister give me the details for during the week and weekends? Can he let me know what they are during daytime and evening on different days?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** On different weekends there will be different demands, depending on the events that are on; it varies so much.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** A normal weekday and a normal weekend; that will suffice.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** What we could do is choose a specific week and give the member the figures for that week. Would he be happy with that?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Give me a month, four separate weeks in one month. I would be happy with that.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** By way of supplementary answer, we will provide figures for police who are involved actively in policing duties in a given four-week period.

[3.20 pm]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, minister. Member for Hillarys, I am trying to give the supplementary number so that we have it clear and we can record it, but nobody can hear it, including Hansard.

*[Supplementary Information No B38.]*

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** On page 998, the eighth major initiative is to complete the infrastructure requirements as part of providing a permanent policing presence in remote areas. Is the minister aware that the current magistrate has told police prosecutors and on-duty police officers that they are not to wear their uniforms while travelling to different court locations in the Kimberley Magistrates Court circuit area, and they are not to wear their uniforms in court? If the minister is aware, does a magistrate have the power to tell police officers how to dress when on duty and when appearing as police prosecutors in court?

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** I am aware that the magistrate in the Broome magisterial district had instructed police officers not to wear uniforms when they were travelling with him on a plane and when they were appearing in court. I wrote to the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate to complain about that, because my belief is that it is the commissioner's right to dictate whether or not police wear uniforms. I believe the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate then wrote to the magistrate in Broome, saying that the police would wear their uniforms in court, to which he subsequently agreed. This goes back about only six weeks. However, he has insisted that when police travel with him on a plane, they travel in plain clothes because he does not want to give the perception when he gets off the plane in these communities that there is any collusion between police and the magistrate. I have accepted that much, but I have insisted that the police officers wear their uniforms when they are in court.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** Is the Commissioner of Police aware that the magistrate alights from the plane with police prosecutors who are not in uniform and gets into a marked police car to travel to the court?

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** I am not aware of that.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The fact is that often only limited vehicles and facilities are available in these remote communities, so there has to be an element of sharing cooperation, but there is also a requirement that the community understands that the magistrate is not a police officer.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** My point is that Magistrate Bloemen wants the police to be seen not wearing a uniform on the plane, yet when he gets off the plane, he is hopping into a marked police car. I am just wondering if the minister could make some inquiries about what Magistrate Bloemen is up to with the police.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I think the commissioner has answered the question on how the matter has arisen and how it has been dealt with.

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**Ms S.E. WALKER:** It is my understanding that he is about to again implement the no uniform in court for police officers policy, and I am wondering whether the minister will make inquiries.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am very pleased to know that the member for Nedlands can foretell what a magistrate is going to do.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** He announced it.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** This question is probably in line with the question the member for Murray asked on protection of critical infrastructure. Is the partnership approach referred to under "Major Initiatives For 2006-07" the memorandum of understanding to which the minister referred? What role for the state police is envisaged in that partnership, in light of the fact that it also involves armed forces joint operations?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The MOU that has been committed to by the government does not have legal effect. It is really a commitment to work cooperatively together. It does not allow state instrumentalities such as the police to assume the responsibilities of commonwealth agencies, nor vice versa, but it is a very clear commitment in our respective jurisdictions to work cooperatively to deal with the terrorist threat that currently exists.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Is that focused more on an intelligence side of things or on an operational side of things?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It is a mixture of the lot. The whole approach to dealing with the new environment with the threat from terrorism is very multifaceted and far reaching. This is one key component to ensure that the police in WA will work in a cooperative way, and that the commonwealth will vice versa work cooperatively with us, to make sure that we are not overlapping or getting in each other's way and that we are conveying appropriate intelligence efficiently and effectively through the different levels of government.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** So there is no lead agency for this arrangement.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There are lead agencies, but that is the bigger picture of the response to terrorism. The MOU is just one part of how we cooperate in working towards it, but a much bigger picture is where there are lead agencies both at the state level and nationally.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** On page 1006, the second dot point in part reads -

Acquired two ANPR (Argus) Units from which 37 operations have been conducted in the first six months of the financial year.

What did they cost to acquire and what do they cost to operate? Can the motorists of Perth expect to see more of these operations on the roads?

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** The automatic numberplate recognition cameras are basically a laptop computer and a camera. The cost of them is about \$26 000 each. We run operations monthly around the metropolitan area and we will be moving them into regional WA as well.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** Are they a good policing vehicle?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** That is a level of operational and technical information that I will seek assistance in answering.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** They are a very effective tool. I will give the member an example of how effective they can be. When we ran an operation in one of the southern suburbs about six weeks ago, one in six vehicles was stopped and the drivers spoken to as a result of information that the ANPR provided. The database is loaded with all sorts of information ranging from the licensing of vehicles, driver's licensing, warrants, people who are wanted for questioning, to persons of interest etc. When we ran that operation there for several hours the hit rate was one in six, which is a very substantial hit rate indeed.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The heading under "Significant Issues and Trends" on page 990 is "The Office of Crime Prevention". In part the paragraph there states that the number of reported assaults is up 23 per cent over the previous year and the Office of Crime Prevention has commenced work on a range of strategies and programs to address this area. Why have reported assaults increased so dramatically? What are these strategies and programs? How much money will be spent to implement these programs and how will the government measure the success of these programs?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** In 2003-04 a total of 245 617 offences were reported to police. In 2004-05 there were 231 387. This represents a 5.8 per cent decrease in offences. More recent data has shown that continuing trend of a reduction in the total number of offences. Despite the overall decrease in the number of offences reported to police, the number of assaults, both aggravated and non-aggravated, increased by 3 929, or 23 per cent, over the same period. Almost two-thirds of the number of assaults reported in 2004-05 were non-aggravated assaults. The commissioner may wish to add more detail, but I am advised that the more proactive approach to family violence reports has resulted in a larger number of offences; that is, where previously family violence matters

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were simply left, the police are now pursuing them, resulting in offence reports. That is the major contributor to that increase. Keep in mind that the increase is very much counter to the overall trend of a reduction of offences, and does show that the more proactive approach by the police in this area, in dealing with what needs to be dealt with, is resulting in an increased number of offences. I do not know if the commissioner wants to say something in addition to that.

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** I think the minister has provided a pretty fair summary of that. Family violence accounts for about 50 per cent of all recorded assaults on the police system. This is a national trend, one that we have been discussing in Melbourne over the past couple of days. The increases in assaults are due to police capturing the statistics, and so having a focus on family violence and putting these things on the computer. Some years ago they were not captured and they were not put on the computer, so they were not being recorded. The incidence of family violence in Aboriginal communities is also quite high. With police having a presence in the multi-functional remote policing facilities around the state, we are also now capturing statistics that we have never captured before, and offences are being reported that have never been reported before, so it is pushing up the recorded rate. In some respects, although it looks as though it is a bad statistic, it is also a positive statistic of the police collecting the information, having it on the system and being able to respond to it.

[3.30 pm]

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The minister has not answered the other three points. What are the strategies and programs that the minister says he has put in place? How much money will be spent to implement those programs? How will the government measure the success of those programs?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The Office of Crime Prevention has been transferred to WA Police, but it was previously in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The Office of Crime Prevention clearly needs to complement and work with the police, but a very wide range of approaches are being taken with CCTV, for example. A whole range of police operational matters that flow from the -

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** CCTV? The minister is talking about family and domestic violence. People do not have CCTV in their homes.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** No, we are talking about the total number of offences, which is tackling a whole range of offences.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The minister is saying that of the increased incidence of serious assaults of 23 per cent over and above last year, 50 per cent is down to domestic violence.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** That is where the increase is, but that does not mean we do not continue to worry about the whole range of other forms of offences. The fact is the police are now actively responding to family violence. That - a very positive move - shows up as a negative in the figures because they are reporting more offences, but offences across the community in a whole range of other areas also need to be tackled.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** How much money will be spent to implement those programs?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will ask Stuart Reid, a manager from the Office of Crime Prevention, to assist in answering that.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I also want to know how the government will measure the success of those programs.

**Mr R.S. Reid:** I am happy to answer that element of the question, too. The community violence prevention strategy is in the process of development. A green paper, a discussion paper, was released at the end of last year and an extensive consultation process took place to determine whether or not the kinds of strategies outlined in that paper are in line with community expectations. The response during that community consultation was that, yes, indeed they are. They cover a range of the other-than-family-violence issues, including workplace violence, road rage and one of the biggest ones, of course, alcohol-fuelled violence. There are a range of actions outlined in that green paper. We are now at the stage at which the agencies are contributing to a matrix indicating their lead agency status, to take responsibility for particular actions. Within the next month or so we expect to have that strategy developed to a point at which it can be presented to cabinet, with some budget estimates associated with it, but at this stage we are in the process of developing the costings. It is too early for us to determine what sort of costs will be involved and which of the priorities will be picked up and developed further. On the question of the ways in which this strategy will be measured, we have commissioned an external organisation to assist us with the development of key performance indicators. It has proposed a framework which will form part of the proposal that goes to cabinet. We are expecting this to be completed some time around July 2006.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Which is the external company?

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**Mr R.S. Reid:** I will have to take that on notice. I know the people involved but I cannot remember the name of their company.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will give an undertaking to provide, by way of supplementary information, the name of the company and their brief.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Their brief and their costings.

*[Supplementary Information No B39.]*

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I refer to page 1009, and the fifth line item on metal detectors under the subheading "Completed Works". I recall that this received some press. How successful have those metal detectors been in uncovering, as it were, concealed weapons?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There is clearly a concern in a range of nightspots, particularly around Northbridge, about people carrying concealed weapons, such as guns and knives. The line item relates to the purchase of those metal detectors and their application. I do not think we have one with us so that members could see a police officer handling and carrying one. One of the other issues that goes with this is police concern about needle sticks. When police are searching people, these metal detectors may not be able to pick up those and very small needle syringes, so we are also spending a large amount of money on these new, turtle-skinned gloves that are made of Kevlar fibre, which I will pass around. Officers will be issued with these gloves - I think, \$450 000 has been allocated in the budget - so that when searching people or vehicles etc, they will be protected from potential injury from a needle stick, with all the health consequences that can flow from that. We are looking at not only metal detectors for heavy weapons, but also protecting officers with these new gloves.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** This is an abuse of this committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Hillarys does not have the call.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** The minister knows it is an abuse. He comes armed with all the fruit and goodies. We have a lot of questions to ask. This is an abuse of this process, as always.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The computer aided dispatch and communications services roll-out program was announced this week. Page 1011 is headed "Financial Statements". With the CADCOM roll-out is a much lauded new radio system. How much did that system cost? I have been advised that the cost is somewhere in the vicinity of half a billion dollars since the project started. How much is being spent on consultants for that project? I have been advised the sum is around \$75 million. Is this a state-of-the-art system or, by the nature of information technology, has the evolution of the system made it obsolete by today's standards?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The overall budget for the police metropolitan radio network is \$59.2 million. The project is currently on budget. The contract was awarded to Motorola for the voice radio network and Union Switch and Signal Pty Ltd for limited car facilities and automatic vehicle location. It is expected to be delivered in the last quarter of this year, and the operational pilot is due to commence later this year. The rollout for full use will be in 2007.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Perhaps to make myself clear, I am looking at the entire CADCOM project, which started some nine years ago.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I think it had different components to it.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** My understanding is that it had to go back to the drawing board on a number of occasions. People went broke and other suppliers had to be found etc. I am interested to know the entire cost of that project.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** There are a whole range of projects. We need to be clear about which program the member is referring to. I have given information that the budget for the police metropolitan radio network is \$59.2 million. It is anticipated that it will be delivered on budget. I know there were a range of bigger and other things, which I suspect the member is alluding to, but he needs to be more specific about which aspect he is referring to.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to the entire project from start to finish. As I understand it, it is about to be delivered. I would like to know what is the end of the story and what is the total figure. I do not mind having the answer by way of supplementary information.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I would be happy to do that, but we need to have clear what the member is asking, because there have been a whole range of technological projects in WA Police.

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**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I am asking about CADCOM, the radio rollouts and the rise and fall of various contractors, and for a breakdown of the consultants who were paid on that particular project - I think the cost was astronomical. I think British Aerospace was in there for a while.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** If the member is talking to that point on page 1009, I have answered that; that is, the police metropolitan radio network will cost \$59.2 million, and it is currently anticipated that it will come in on budget. There are other matters, but that is the point the member is raising.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Is the minister prepared to provide the information that I have requested?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The problem I have is that I do not think the member's question has been clear enough to let me know what he is after. He has related it to this item. I have answered that question. I think he is getting confused with other items. I cannot provide detailed responses to an unclear question.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I assure the minister that it is clear in my mind.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** My question relates to the outcome on page 993 of a safer and more secure community. Is it true that uniformed police officers are stationed in the Family Court of Western Australia?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** How does that relate to page 993?

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** It relates to a safer and more secure community.

[3.40 pm]

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I understand that one officer is assigned to that court.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** Is it true that earlier this year that police officer was summarily withdrawn from the Family Court for front-line policing, and that Chief Justice Michael Holden had to phone the Commissioner of Police to ask him to return him? Why was he withdrawn?

**Dr K.J. O'Callaghan:** As part of our Frontline First strategy, we reviewed all the non-operational areas in police. One of the particular police officers who were looked at for removal back to the front line was the officer at the Family Court. I received correspondence from the justice there, who was able to persuade us that because of some of the difficulties they experience there, we should leave the officer there, and that officer is staying.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** Was the Chief Justice consulted before that officer was withdrawn by the police?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I am not sure how that relates to a budget matter. Operational matters -

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** For a safer and more secure community.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Certainly the figures show that we are achieving that.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** Is the minister refusing to answer the question?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** No, I am not refusing. I am saying that the question should be in keeping with what we are dealing with in the budget.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** It is. I am asking a further question to the question that I asked, which has been accepted, which is whether the Chief Justice was consulted.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** As I said earlier, I doubt whether the first question related to the budget items we are dealing with.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** The minister answered it.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** We sought to bend over backwards to provide an answer.

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** No, the minister answered it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Ms S.E. WALKER:** The minister does not want to answer the question.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** This is not the basis for a fishing trip for wherever the member wants to go on operational matters.

**Ms J.A. RADISICH:** I refer to the eleventh dot point on page 1008 under "Capital Works Program". Will the minister please update the committee about the progress of the new police station at Ellenbrook, which is, might I say, welcomed by the Swan Hills community?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It has an approved budget of \$3.08 million. It is hoped that it will be ready for occupancy in December this year.

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 24 May 2006]

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Mr Murray Cowper; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Sue Walker; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr  
Terry Waldron; Mr John McGrath; Mr Mick Murray

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**The appropriation was recommended.**