

POLICE, RANDOM BREATH TEST STATISTICS

605. Mr OMODEI to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

I refer the minister to alarming revelations of widespread rorting of random breath test statistics by police, as outlined in the report of the Ombudsman.

- (1) What action has been taken over the initial internal investigation by the Police Service into this matter, which the Ombudsman described as disappointing, to ensure that this kind of cover-up does not occur in future?
- (2) Will the minister ensure that the Police Service implements the recommendations of the Ombudsman to conduct further periodic reviews, with involvement from the Office of the Auditor General, to guarantee ongoing reliability of random breath testing?

Mrs ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)-(2) The matters revealed in the Ombudsman's report, which was tabled in this House a couple of days ago, relate to the rorting of random breath test figures, which we have been aware of for months. As members may be aware, there was an initial investigation in the Wanneroo district, which proved to be inadequate. That investigation was forwarded to the Police Service command. The report was also forwarded to the Ombudsman. Neither the service command nor the Ombudsman was satisfied with that and they both conducted their own further review of the situation.

What has occurred is totally and completely unacceptable. Significant action has been taken by the Police Service to remedy this situation so that it does not occur again. Clearly, a range of checks and balances must be put in place. We found that the only evidence police officers had to provide to determine they had done a random breath test was to jot down the numberplates of cars. As a consequence, they jotted down the car numberplates of people they had not random breath tested. That is a very unacceptable practice. It is not very impressive, especially when one looks at, first, how it reflects on the police officers in this State, and, secondly, how it impacts on our understanding of the road safety figures in this State. We try to assess the percentage of people who are still drinking and driving. If the figures are faked in any way, it means that our information is not correct. I am quite confident that the procedures that have now been put in place will ensure that this practice does not continue. We will implement the Ombudsman's recommendations and periodically review the RBT figures and the practices that the police are employing.