

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) informed the Assembly that she was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Liberal Party seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [2.48 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the WA Labor government for putting the freedom of violent perpetrators ahead of keeping Western Australians safe.

This motion speaks to the expectations of members of the community to feel safe in their homes and in public. It is the core function of any government and it is the right of any Western Australian. A string of shocking revelations over the last couple of weeks has once again shown that the WA Labor government is absolutely failing in this area. Time and again this government has prioritised the freedom of violent perpetrators or offenders ahead of the safety of not only their victims, who have in many cases experienced the most horrific behaviour and torturous acts at the hands of those perpetrators, but also the broader community. Time and again we have heard about cases in which those perpetrators have been released early on parole, only to then reoffend with tragic consequences. The most recent and another shocking example is that of the thug who attacked Danny Hodgson in a one-punch incident in 2021, leaving him with traumatic brain injuries. That violent offender was not only out on bail for 23 charges at the time that he punched Mr Hodgson, but also last week we learnt that despite being sentenced to three years and eight months over the attack that left Mr Hodgson permanently disabled, he was released early, and guess what? He has been charged with assaulting someone else. When the details were revealed at the end of last week, we were told by the Attorney General that the community had every right to be upset. We certainly agree with those comments. The community absolutely has every right to be upset and very angry because the government is failing to keep them safe. It is incomprehensible that that offender was allowed to be out on bail given his record. I note the Attorney General corrected the record as well about the matter of parole —

Mr J.R. Quigley: In relation to bail.

Ms L. METTAM: He corrected the record in relation to bail in this house today. That offender was already on bail and showed a blatant disregard for the law when he senselessly attacked Hodgson in 2021, leaving him with very serious physical, emotional and financial battles. His life will never be the same. Why was that offender not made to at least serve the time for committing that heinous crime against Hodgson? That is a reasonable question. Even more incomprehensible was that when the offender faced the court after the latest alleged attack, bail was not opposed. This is despite the fact that the Premier and the Attorney General emphatically told this place last week that bail was opposed, and pointed the finger at the courts. The Attorney General got up in this place today to offer a personal explanation that that bail information was from a media report and it was wrong. I note the Premier also made comments to that effect as well. This is simply not good enough. It is not good enough for the minister who oversees such an important portfolio or for the government that has had ongoing failures occur under its watch. It did not get that important information right and it relied on the *Geraldton Guardian* instead of seeking a proper briefing on this matter. It is absolutely staggering that in a case such as this, the Premier has so blindly wheeled out mistruths. The truth is that this government is clearly failing and it believes that the freedom of these criminals is somehow more important than the safety of the community. The justice system has unequivocally failed Mr Hodgson. It has also failed the latest alleged victim and the community has every right to feel outraged and upset that these violent thugs are not being forced to do the time for their heinous crimes.

This is not just a one-off. This government oversees a system whereby the Prisoners Review Board approved almost half of the applications that came before it in the 2021–22 financial year. As reported in *The West Australian*, of the 3 431 parole decisions made by the board that year, 1 627 were approved. In 2018–19, more than half of the parole applications were approved. If we compare that with 2013–14, only 34 per cent were approved; almost two-thirds of those applications were denied under the previous government. One of the 1 627 applicants who were released early in 2021–22 was, of course, ex-bikie Luke Noormets in June 2022. He was released despite being behind bars for kidnapping, assaulting and torturing a man for 13 hours before setting him on fire—an unspeakably cruel and callous crime. But adding to the mystifying decision of the board to release Luke Noormets early is that it apparently considered his criminal history, which included time behind bars for selling meth and charges relating to a terrifying home invasion. I had the opportunity to speak to the individual involved in that home invasion who hid in the linen cupboard at the time. I was told that Luke Noormets smashed in the front door of his former partner, stormed through the house and threatened to kill her and her boyfriend. However, while the board was aware of his criminal record, it also noted there were no convictions for actual violence against the person. As we know, 13 months into parole, Noormets killed his ex-partner Georgia Lyall and then took his own life. Instead of calling it out for what was, which was that the wrong call had been made with tragic consequences, the Premier instead claimed that releasing prisoners on parole generally offers more protection to the community in the longer term, stating —

In this particular instance, the perpetrator had been on parole in the community for a period of over 13 months under the supervision of Adult Community Corrections without any incidents being brought to the attention of the Prisoners Review Board.

Apparently Luke Noormets' early release offered more protection to the community in the longer term, somehow, and the board was justified in releasing him because during his 13 months under supervision, he had not offended. According to *The West Australian*, fewer than five per cent of accused and convicted criminals are being monitored by a GPS ankle bracelet. It has been a year since the government's GPS tracking trial of 100 family and domestic violence offenders was finalised. We heard further details about that today, but it is clear from the Attorney General's response to questions being asked in this place that people have been scrambling to put together the interim report on that trial that finished a year ago. It is also extraordinary that the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence was unable to answer those questions. This is despite the fact that the former Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence had plenty to say about it in 2020 when she launched this trial with much fanfare and with \$15.5 million in funds for 100 new devices and extra officers. She said —

“This initiative is part of the McGowan Government's commitment to tackle the scourge of family and domestic violence.

As I stated, the trial finished in August last year.

It is clear that there was no handover with the new minister, because when she was asked in this house about what the former Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence had announced, despite being eight months into the job, the minister was unable to answer the questions, let alone tell us when the outcomes would be published and when the public can expect to see a final report. Instead of going and getting the information, when asked a second time, the minister outright refused to answer, instead leaving it to the Attorney General to table a hastily prepared two-page interim report, which falls well short of being called a report. That highlights a missed opportunity to be able to track more of these very violent offenders in our community.

Yesterday, we saw reports and learnt that one of those trackers may have been allocated to someone in hotel quarantine. *The West Australian* reported that Rach Mac, who was throttled and violently assaulted, had been assured that her ex-partner had been fitted with a GPS tracker, only to be told two days later that it had instead been fitted to someone who kept breaching hotel quarantine. We would like some further clarification on this matter as well. It is clear that this government campaigned to keep WA safe, but has completely dropped the ball on keeping the community safe, particularly victims of family and domestic violence. There is no priority or urgency to increase these measures. The government has announced a statement of intent and a taskforce—a plan for a plan.

In the summit, the WA Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing raised key recommendations, including coercive control education and more cash for refugees and safe houses. We have heard many reports of women being turned away from refugees due to capacity issues. These refugees are increasingly doing it tough. It also recommended the establishment of a statewide family and domestic violence intake and assessment centre, and a commitment to housing guarantees for those escaping violence. We know that the report into homelessness conducted in the other place highlighted the very real need to address the gaps in crisis care so that these women do not feel that their only option is to return to the home of the perpetrator. This government has been scrambling to find the basic details about its own programs and announcements. This government has overseen a system that seems to be putting the freedom of these violent perpetrators ahead of the safety of the community. I go back to my earlier comment. The Attorney General is right; the community is upset. It has every reason to feel upset and angry, because it expects and deserves better.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.02 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Vasse —

That this house condemns the WA Labor government for putting the freedom of violent perpetrators ahead of keeping Western Australians safe.

The Leader of the Liberal Party outlined a number of circumstances and spoke about a number of cases. We on this side of the house acknowledge that the government is not responsible for every criminal act in the state. If criminals act irresponsibly and want to break the law, the government cannot stop every individual who wants to make a bad decision or commit a crime from undertaking that act. But what it can do is recognise the importance of keeping the public safe when dealing with offenders and considering whether those perpetrators should be released or released with certain conditions, be they physical conditions such as a GPS bracelet, as has been spoken about, or whether bail should not be granted.

The government does not make these decisions, but the government sets up some of the resourcing and the systems, puts in place policy and is ultimately responsible to the people of Western Australia when those systems break down. It is undeniable that we have seen a breakdown of the systems in recent times. That has been highlighted by some cases raised in this place, but those cases highlight a systemic problem. If we look at some figures on

crime and issues besetting the police force, we see that this is a deep issue that is running right through the core of this government's inability to keep Western Australians safe from these violent perpetrators. In fact, it has led to the situation whereby it is entirely reasonable to suspect that the government is putting the freedom of violent perpetrators ahead of keeping Western Australians safe.

The Attorney General has argued in Parliament about his measures and things he has done in this place to keep Western Australians safe and to stamp out crime et cetera, but we see a continuing increase in crime numbers —

Mr J.R. Quigley: Which ones?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I will go through them. We see continuing failures of the Attorney General in certain high-profile cases to get his facts right. The Attorney General today retracted the statements he made in answer to questions only last week. He then went on to blame the media for the fact that he had misled the house. He has now corrected that and has put that correction out there, but I gave the same opportunity to the Premier in question time. I asked the Premier today about his claims last week regarding the bail of Danny Hodgson's attacker. He said, as appears in *Hansard* —

... this person was arrested and the police opposed bail, as we expect them to ...

He did not say it once; he said it twice, and there was a whole lot of language wrapped around that. I gave him the opportunity to accept that that statement was misleading. Instead, he said that the Attorney General had corrected the record. The Attorney General had corrected his own record; he had not corrected the Premier's record. The Premier had the opportunity to take a misleading statement from *Hansard* and make a correction. If it was something that had come about because he had been listening to his Attorney General, and his Attorney General has been listening to media statements and reports rather than actually interrogating the circumstances properly, it is little wonder that we had a statement that was not in fact correctly read into the record here in this place by not only the Attorney General, but also the Premier. The Premier refused to backtrack on that and instead just pointed to the Attorney General's statement as the justification for him not correcting the record himself. He should have taken the opportunity to correct the record himself. The statement that he made was incorrect. Regardless of whether that was because he had been given incorrect information by an Attorney General who clearly did not bother to get to the bottom of the facts, but instead just relied upon news reports—that is up to him—the Premier is the person who decides who is in his cabinet. If somebody who has been accepted into a position of that import is relying upon what has been said in the media to make statements to the house, that is a matter for the Premier. I put it to the Premier that he needs to consider whether it is time for the Attorney General to hand over the reins to one of the other lawyers in the chamber who seem to have ambitions. We know that there needs to be change and an acceptance that what is happening at the moment is not good enough, and a determination from the government to address those issues. We are not seeing that.

The Minister for Police has not been in the house for the last four sitting days, so it is hard to ask questions of him, but I will talk about police because it is not our fault that the representative is not here. This is a substantive motion in this house and other ministers can make comment about that aspect. We know that police are leaving the force in droves. There were 473 resignations last year, which is about three times the norm. I am told that, normally, about 150 people will resign from the police in a year. In the 189-year history of the police force, 473 is the highest number of resignations. That itself should be ringing alarm bells to the government. It cannot be ringing alarm bells to the police minister, because he is not here, but the rest of the government should be thinking, "Wow, that's actually pretty worrying. What are we doing about that?" Within the Western Australia Police Force, 76.8 per cent are dissatisfied with the management and culture of the organisation, 37.6 per cent are dissatisfied with their working hours and workload, and 33.6 per cent are dissatisfied with the lack of career development or promotional opportunity. The list goes on. There is dissatisfaction in the police force and we are seeing the effect of that right across regional WA. We know that keeping police in regional areas is difficult. I quote from *Police News* regarding regional tenures and the like —

"More options for officers to stay in regional towns if they've set up their lives and families in those towns. Provide actual support to officers who are in critical situations, not just five minutes of lip service."

The previous government improved allowances and conditions, and it provided better regional housing. This government is not doing enough and the minister needs to act and to do it better. I believe the minister is overseas at the moment. On another one of his overseas trips, he went to entice police officers from the UK and Ireland and other places, I think, to join Western Australian ranks. It would be better if he was listening to the concerns of Western Australian officers who are here and leaving at the rate of 450 a year. Surely that would be more productive than jaunting overseas. I know everyone likes to go overseas now because we were not allowed to for a long time, but that is not the best way to manage this situation with the police force. Obviously, the working conditions and the environment for our police officers are not sufficient. The government needs to look at that situation. The government is responsible for putting in place resources for the police force. It is not the police force that does

that. It is the government. If police officers are being asked to work overly long hours because there are not enough members and resources, the government needs to take that on.

I asked some questions the other day in this place about police assaults. In 2022–23, there were 1 447 assaults on police officers in Western Australia. That is equivalent to one in five members being assaulted in that financial year. It is the highest offence rate in 14 years and the highest since mandatory sentencing came in in 2013, I think it was. In 2013, a statutory review of the legislation was undertaken and another was to take place in 2018. My understanding is that that did not happen and still has not happened. The number of assaults on police officers is rising, but no review of the appropriateness of the regime is taking place. A bill has been introduced to protect livestock, the dogs and the horses that work with police, but there is nothing to further review the situation for police officers. We are very supportive of looking after our four-legged helpers in the police force and making sure that they are not subjected to aggression or violence. Of course, they should be protected, but so should the police officers who are being subjected to assault at an ever-growing level.

That is having spin-offs across regional WA. We have seen, year on year, a rise in the number of homicides in the regions. We are seeing assaults on families rising. We have seen non-family assaults rising. We are seeing threatening behaviour in family situations and non-family situations rising right across the state, year on year, under this government. It is not good enough. The government needs to act.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [3.13 pm]: I rise to make a very brief contribution on the motion, which I support. I want to touch on something that the member for Moore just mentioned—that is, the enormous stress under which a lot of our police officers, particularly in the regions, are working. I speak to a lot of police across our regions and one thing that I pick up and is quite clear to me is that some of them just want to be cared for and some of them just want to be acknowledged. I had a conversation with one of the officers in charge who was leaving the force after 36 years. He had worked in the regions for 34 years. He spoke to me, or at me, for about an hour—I was happy to listen—about how disappointed he was at the lack of acknowledgement he received as he stepped out of the police force after all that time. He went on further to say that if anyone in his family wanted to go into the police force, he would not recommend it. I felt very sorry for him because he had committed an enormous amount of time to a lot of communities, particularly throughout the north west, and he had not received the level of acknowledgement and been thanked in the manner that he had expected. I think the point the member for Moore makes is very relevant.

I say thank you to all police. I see them out and about in very remote and regional locations doing an amazing job. They are all things to all people. They are the first port of call. They do not always have the support in my electorate that they might have in the metropolitan area. At some points, they take care of children or people's mental health. Their scope extends far and wide and their remit is large. I have spoken in this place before about this issue and said that regional managers need to return to some departments. I think they need guidance and assistance. The teams that work in those locations work very hard, but at the moment they are spread thin. We need to ensure that they have the resources that they need.

We spoke in here last week about domestic violence. We have levels of poverty and housing issues. We have safe houses. The police need somewhere to take these children who will, at some point in time, start undertaking these crimes. We can do a raft of things to try to help the police. That is my focus in these last couple of minutes because I believe that police need significant help in lots of spaces. Their families also need help. In some locations, they are very visible because they are small communities. When they go home, they are not going somewhere that they can hide. Everyone knows where they live. In that sense, family members also potentially feel vulnerable because of the job that their mother or father undertakes.

I urge the government to look closely at some of the wraparound services that help the police, such as the drop-in centres and drug and alcohol centres, and potentially extending the 24/7 support for child protection. I understand that those workers are under stress, but having those backup supports in place will go a long way towards helping curb some incidents happening across the regions. No doubt they are happening in the metro area as well, but I see it from a regional perspective because I am in that space. Some offenders whom the police deal with are repeat offenders and in a lot of the smaller towns everybody knows who the offenders are. Programs to try to help those people manage their behavioural patterns are really important. I also believe that the women's refuges are a large part of this as well. Some of the refuges will not take children at all ages when a parent goes into a refuge. There is a gap there that also becomes a problem.

In closing, I would like to again acknowledge the police and again ask the government to look closely at extending those support networks and services that the police need, particularly in small and remote areas.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.18 pm]: I reiterate what the member for North West Central said. The lighthearted approach of the Attorney General worries me. He talks about the 57 pieces of legislation he brought in, while the Western Australian public is horrified by what happened to

Danny Hodgson, horrified about what happened to the person who knocked him over and now horrified that he was back out on the street. It is not good enough.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General) [3.18 pm]: It is sad that a party that has no policies in this space has turned to a scare campaign on the public of Western Australia. Let me start by saying that the opposition has tried to beat up a controversy about the fitting of bracelets on domestic violence offenders and other offenders. This was an initiative of a Labor government. Members opposite were in power for seven and a half years. How many domestic violence offenders had a bracelet fitted and how many DV murders were committed during those seven and a half years? As I pointed out last week, the Ombudsman's report detailed that 22 deaths relating to domestic violence were reported in 2016–17. We also know—not from me and not from Labor, but from the Ombudsman—that in 2020–21 and 2021–22, nine deaths were reported each year. That shows that the measures we have taken have been successful in reducing homicide in domestic settings. The member for Vasse said that the government is not doing anything or that it is not doing these bracelets right. Let us face it: members opposite did zero fixing. Zero bracelets were fixed on DV offenders during the seven and a half years of the previous Liberal–National government—there were zero; a duck egg. I went through the report earlier and outlined that 403 people had been considered. Of those, 160 went straight to prison and 243 wore bracelets. The newspaper made a big deal about the fact that 2.7 per cent of bracelets had been cut off. One per cent of 100 is one, two per cent is two, and four per cent is four, so we are talking about four people out of 243 who cut off their bracelets—2.5 per cent! Members opposite not only failed in government to fit one ankle bracelet to a DV offender to keep them out of an exclusion zone, but also now berate this government for introducing a system that has allowed the affixation of more than 200 bracelets to offenders, of which only 2.5 per cent have been interfered with.

The member for Vasse presented a vacuous argument when she said that Labor cares more about dangerous criminals than honest members of the public. What a silly, silly thing to say. The first thing I will turn to is our high-risk serious offenders' legislation. The member will remember this: she did not want to vote for it because it was Labor legislation. Does she remember? She did not support it. She did not stand up and go, "Rah, rah, rah, this is fantastic"; she just abused the government and attacked me in particular for letting high-risk serious offenders out. What a silly thing to say. Between 1 January 2021 and 19 September 2023, the high-risk serious offenders team at the State Solicitor's Office made 154 applications for detention or supervision orders. During that same period, 30 high-risk detention orders were made. Thirty criminals who had come to the end of their sentence were kept in prison beyond the sentence imposed by the court. This was not their earliest date for parole; they had served the entirety of their sentence. Under Labor legislation, those dangerous criminals are kept from the public. I will state the numbers again: 30 detention orders were made, as well as 59 high-risk supervision orders, and a lot of those offenders had to wear bracelets. Rather than caring more about dangerous criminals than honest members of the public as the member for Vasse said, the government is keeping dangerous criminals in prison longer than judges ordered them to stay in prison.

Not all prisoners are in the same category. Some can be better managed. Members opposite support our system of parole in Western Australia and have done so for years. What is the purpose of the system of parole? It is to have a period towards the end of a prisoner's sentence during which they can be supervised in the community; otherwise, we would just release them without supervision at the end of their sentence. The member raised the case of Noormets, who was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for torture, deprivation of liberty and all those matters. That was a substantial term. He was ordered to serve five years before being eligible for parole. He served five years and obviously came up for consideration. As I have said in this chamber before, but the member for Vasse has not taken note of, what the Prisoners Review Board had before them was his record and not the details of allegations that another former partner had made. He had been charged with three offences, including trespass onto her property. Members will recall that he had been there earlier in the night and had been told to go away. He left, but then came back in the early hours of the morning and secreted himself in a bush, waiting for his former partner to return with her new partner. He then burst into the home behind them. He was charged with trespass, damage to a door and disobeying a police order. When we look at that record, we do not see anything very serious in terms of violence. That is why I said the system needs to be focused more on what was behind the charge of disobeying the police order. We are working with the parole board to review this. Breach of a police order does not sound like much, but we subsequently found out that a whole lot more was behind it. That detail was not in the document that I saw. It just said, "Record: trespass, damage, breach of police order." It did not refer to him running through the house and threatening to kill someone, busting a second door or all the threats of violence that he had made. I agree that that part of the system needs to be tightened. That is what I said we will do—make sure that any breach of a restraining order or police order given in a family and domestic violence setting is treated with the utmost seriousness by the Prisoners Review Board. I am confident that that will happen.

The member mentioned a case in which a person was ordered to wear a bracelet but no bracelet was available. I read about this in the paper as well and I was quite shocked. I make no criticism of the victim, Rach Mac. Her abuser was a person by the name of Timothy Michael Buchanan. He was jailed for some assaults on her prior to 2018. We have searched and searched the integrated court management system on our computer and there is no record

of him being charged after 2020. We can find no court record that he was ever ordered to wear a bracelet. As the member for Vasse will recall, bracelets only came in as part of the regime after 2020. There was no charge after 2020 as far as we can ascertain. The member has been in contact with the woman and she might be able to give her more detail. *The West Australian*—I make no criticism of *The West*—published what it was given. What we must realise about this woman is that she is a very traumatised victim of a very nasty criminal. But it appears to us that the story has become a little muddled because there was no conviction after 2020. We can find no record of a bracelet being ordered. The bracelets are supplied by a third party under contract. At all times, a quantity of 20 was available for COVID travellers. We have taken out a contract for bracelets for DV offenders on bail, which the former Liberal–National government never introduced. The contract is for a separate batch of bracelets; if they ever run dry or we are getting low, we will call for the supplier to give us more. They are provided under a contract scheme. It does not matter how many we get—we get as many as we need. I invite the member for Vasse or the reporter, Mr Flint, to very gently, because she is a traumatised woman, go back and clarify the story because it has led to alarm in the community. I am not blaming Mrs Mac—she has been through a terrible time and her abuser was jailed—but the story has caused alarm in the community that the police, in receipt of a court order to fit an offender with a bracelet, would say, “Sorry; none are available. We are using it for a COVID person.” This does not gel with the system at all, nor with the record of Timothy Michael Buchanan. There was no order for a bracelet. I stress again that I am not blaming Mr Flint or Mrs Mac—Mrs Mac gave her account; she is a traumatised lady—but I invite the author of the article and perhaps the member to gently tease this out because I have done my best and we cannot find any record of what was put in the paper or what the Leader of the Liberal Party put to Parliament today.

I know that the member was relying on *The West Australian* in much the same way that I suppose I was put off track by the 31 August article in the *Geraldton Guardian* about the offender who hit Mr Hodgson, which was published two weeks before the matter was raised in Parliament. He was in court on 30 August and the *Guardian* reported it on 31 August, two weeks before it was raised here. I noticed at that time—we search these papers for happenings in the court—that it was reported that the prosecutor said that it was a serious offence and that was why bail was opposed. There was a bit of confusion. What was said in the court was just about that—he was arrested and his bail was refused and that is what they told the magistrate. He was arrested and refused, so it was refused instead of opposed. That is from page 3 of the transcript of proceedings on 30 August in Geraldton. It was conveyed to the Geraldton police station that his bail was refused and he was held in custody and presented to the court. The whole discussion about bail in the court did not involve the police. They said that they had refused him bail. Remembering that this was all to do with a youth supervision order from the Children’s Court, also in court was Ms Sutherland, appearing for youth justice. All the discussions about where he would live and all that was with the youth officer, not the sergeant, but the sergeant said that they could breath test him if that was what the court said needed to happen. It is not a case of this government negligently or wilfully misleading Parliament or that we were relying on newspapers. We relied on what was in the transcript—that the police had opposed bail; what we had been informed by the Department of Justice—that bail had been opposed; and what appeared contemporaneously in the newspaper. I do not blame the member for raising in Parliament circumstances that the community would be very concerned about—that following an order to have a bracelet fitted on a very violent offender, the police rang 45 minutes later to say, “No, it’s going to a COVID detainee.” I do not blame her for raising that because that is a serious matter, but it did not happen. From all the information I have got, it did not happen. I am informed by my department that he was never convicted after the institution of bracelets.

I am trying to think of the name of a book that I read at university that was like *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*. Every year, the member for Moore’s chant is, “Crime keeps rising.” That is “The Chant of Moore”. He does not take us to any figures or source documents. He just says, “Crime’s going up.” The chant of Moore is, “Crime’s going up. Be scared, Perth. Whilst Labor’s in power, crime’s going up. Be scared Perth.” It is all poppycock. It makes for a good chant in his office. It is almost like that chant, “What do we want?”, and the member for Moore says, “More crime now.” That is his cry. I turn to the figures published by the police on the level of crime in 2022 compared with 2016. I would like members to bear in mind that between 2016 and 2022, there was a 10 per cent increase in our population from 2.5-something million to 2.8-something million. There has been a 10 per cent uplift in our population; indeed, more than a quarter of a million people came to our state to share this wonderful safe place with us. What do we see? A comparison between 2016 and 2022 reveals that in 2022, burglary was down 40 per cent and car theft was down 25 per cent. Whilst the member for Moore is sitting there, he can look at the police website. Stealing was down 25 per cent, property damage was down 24 per cent and drug offences were down 42 per cent. I do not want to spoil the party of his chant, “More crime now, more crime now.” That is what the Leader of the Opposition wants reflected by the figures but, in fact, under Labor, the crime rate has been consistently falling. Moreover, the death rate amongst DV victims has been consistently falling. This did not happen by accident or in 2020 because of COVID. This happened because of the systems in the laws that Western Australian Labor put into place.

Just think: there is now a requirement that every police officer attending a domestic violence report will fill out an occurrence sheet and fully record the complaint. Before, police were becoming intermediaries in the fight. Take

the case of Jody Gore. We all remember that because I had to remit her life sentence when she drove a veggie knife into the chest of her abuser under further torment. It was kept from the jury, or not revealed at least, that on over 12 occasions police had been called. The police would calm the situation down. I understand that. They calmed the situation down and left. We do not accept that anymore. WA Labor does not accept that that is the proper policing response. Offenders, having no personal deterrent whatsoever, repeat and repeat. It was just a record on repeat of further alcohol and further domestic violence until it came to the dreadful conclusion that it did. Would it have ever come to that conclusion—would he have died or would she have suffered all those injuries—if this had been taken seriously with a proper response from the outset?

The diminution of the crime figures does not come about by accident. As I said, it comes about through the hard work of this government in working out how we can contain and repress these offenders. How can we?

I have been given no better third-party endorsement than Troy Mercanti's T-shirt: Mr Squigley, eff your laws. One of the most dangerous outlaw motorcycle criminals is complaining about the laws that I introduced. I am a little concerned that it has come back onto me personally. I am a little concerned that one of the most violent criminals is wearing a T-shirt saying, Mr Squigley, eff you. I am equally or more concerned when I see Mr Brajkovich, another violent outlaw motorcycle gang member, come out of court wearing a Raiders T-shirt—which is a banned insignia, by the way; I included the Raiders—and message Mercanti over the airwaves and on our TV screens by holding up his fists and saying to Mercanti, "Keep punching!" Keep punching against what? It is to keep punching against the laws that we put in place to suppress the outlaw motorcycle gangs that visit violence and pervade drugs in our community. Do members think that I like being the target of their angst? Not one bit. But I stood for election on the policy of taking it up to these people. I do not care how much they seek to intimidate me, and I do not care how much they seek to intimidate Labor; we will not take a backward step in the face of this violence, in the face of outlaw motorcycle gangs and in the face of organised crime that presents a direct threat to families in Western Australia.

We will not back down. They can go on TV, threaten me or do what they like. I am not 25 years old anymore; I am vulnerable, but I am not scared of them. I am not scared of them, not because I can defend myself or look after myself, but because I am doing the honest and decent thing by this Parliament and by the community of Western Australia. I am working with my cabinet colleagues and our party to bring in a suite of laws to suppress crime—the very point of these anti-bikie laws. Unlike the criminal organisation anti-association laws, they are effective. Otherwise, these tough nuts would not be walking around with T-shirts saying eff you, Q. They would not. We have got to them. Can members imagine these people sitting up at night in their houses making this T-shirt? We are inside their heads. When they went out onto the streets, I loved it!

I have two things I want to say in the last four minutes. Firstly, Mr Brajkovich's defence when he was charged with insignia was that before he leaves home, he puckers up to his missus and she puts foundation cream and make-up on him so people will not see the insignia. Who would have thought that the toughest bikies in town would be puckering up to their wives to get foundation cream put on their faces? Who would have thought this? Here is the next big endorsement of the Labor Party and our laws. Their chosen mouthpiece, their lawyer Mr Paul Holmes, stood up in court and said, "These laws are unfair. The police are using them to harass my bikie clients."

What did the opposition do to suppress crime? What did it do to suppress outlaw motorcycle gangs? What did it do to suppress the drug trade? Nothing! The best it did is what Moore said, which was to bring in mandatory sentencing for assaults on public officers. He now confesses that, despite the laws they brought in, assaults have kept on going up. He refers to the five-year statutory report about those laws that was prepared by the police and says that the laws do not appear to be achieving their policy objectives. Now, the opposition wants more.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We are attacking the cause.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: What have you done? Nothing—absolutely nothing! The notion that we have put dangerous criminals and their welfare ahead of Western Australians is the most silly proposition that I have seen advanced in this Parliament for years. We just have to go through the legislation—dangerous sex offenders legislation, high-risk offenders legislation and unexplained wealth legislation. That is right; we gave the Corruption and Crime Commission powers over unexplained wealth to haul in criminals who are not even convicted and seize their wealth. We know that is happening because we see the reports in the paper. There was also the unlawful insignia legislation. Yes—my colleague Mr Papalia will be very sad that he is not here. Will you support the gun laws, Moore? Will you and your farmers support the gun laws that we will bring in? There will be no more selling permits to come onto farmland to shoot donkeys and then selling 100 permits so people can get guns. No. We introduced no body, no parole laws, and laws against mass murderers and serial killers. For family and domestic violence law reforms, we brought in laws against partial strangulation because that is an indicator of homicide and that someone will be killed.

Division

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 19 September 2023]
p4790d-4797a

Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Ms Merome Beard; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr John Quigley

Question put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	Ms M. Beard (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (44)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr D.R. Michael	Mr D.A.E. Scaife
Mr G. Baker	Ms J.L. Hanns	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms J.J. Shaw
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms R.S. Stephens
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr M. Hughes	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Dr K. Stratton
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr H.T. Jones	Ms L.A. Munday	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr D.A. Templeman
Ms C.M. Collins	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr S.J. Price	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Ms L. Dalton	Mr P. Lilburne	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Ms M.M. Quirk	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms R. Saffioti	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)

Question thus negatived.