

MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES; POLICE — PERFORMANCE

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 member for Cottesloe seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

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

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.03 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the performance of the Minister for Corrective Services; Police for failing to deliver community safety across his portfolios.

It is quite clear that this government is struggling in many areas and none more so than in the area of protecting our community's safety. I might also say none more so than the performance of the ministers in the chamber today. I do not think that I have seen a flatter performance in this house, because ministers quite clearly know —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Members!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am getting a good contribution across the chamber here. Quite clearly, the government knows that it is failing as a government and no more so than in this portfolio. The government started to fail in health the moment it came into this place, and it has continued to fail in every critical area that is important for this state. Other members on this side in this chamber —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am fascinated. It would have been nice to see this sort of revelry earlier, members, because this is clearly providing some support for the government. Clearly, the ministers cannot cope with the jobs they have in this place.

Members on this side will outline the government's general failings in law and order. My contribution will focus on the multiple failures in youth detention and rehabilitation. I might say that this is an area in which members on that side consider themselves to, in some way, have some superior knowledge. They are fine sitting in the cheap seats and criticising the other side, but they cannot perform when they are in government—on this front and on many others. The failures are not only exacerbating the harm to children, who are overwhelmingly from extremely troubled backgrounds, but also making our community less safe by focusing on punitive measures and not on rehabilitation. When we see what is happening in these facilities, it is very clear that it is increasingly punitive.

The Minister for Corrective Services is completely failing to properly administer one of his key portfolio responsibilities, which is the Banksia Hill Detention Centre for youth. Importantly, he is failing to listen to every credible figure in the youth justice sector who is calling for the immediate closure of the unit 18 youth detention centre at Casuarina Prison. I will go through the list because it is extensive. The past and present Commissioner for Children and Young People, the past and present president of the Children's Court, the past and present Inspector of Custodial Services, and every single peak Aboriginal body in the state of Western Australia are calling for the closure of unit 18, yet this government, with cloth ears and jaw thrust out, is refusing to do it.

We know that many of the youth in unit 18 have committed serious crimes. We know that many of the youth in unit 18 can be dangerous and require specific supervision, but that is nothing new in those prisons. Youth go to prison only if they commit the most serious crimes, and many of those youths were engaged in violent activity outside the prisons. That is the job in those prisons, and in the past, that job has been done.

We also know that the youth, and the whole of society, will be better off if they are rehabilitated. At the moment, members, one in four youths in Banksia Hill will, effectively, go immediately into an adult prison. Rehabilitation is completely failing because the policy has moved from rehabilitation to punishment. As a result, we have seen a substantial deterioration in the behaviour of youth in detention, especially in unit 18. That is not my assertion; that is the assertion of the people who are the experts in this field. They say that the way the government is treating those youths will lead directly to the outcomes we are seeing in youth detention centres.

Over nine months in 2021–22, we saw 11 riots in Banksia Hill. What came out of that? The former Premier, who had made his reputation as the strongman against COVID, decided that he would be the strongman against youth in detention. He described them as terrorists. He said that murderers and rapists were amongst that group, and that the government would take a hard line with unit 18 and detain those children and juveniles in an adult prison facility. I know that it is a separate unit, but it is still within that facility. The government is taking that hard line. The losers in that strategy have been not only the youth in custody, but also the greater public of Western Australia, because one day, the majority of those youths will come out of that detention facility, and they will come out

substantially more harmed than they were when they went in. The public of Western Australia has paid and will continue to pay the price for that.

The last Premier decided to retire and move on to his corporate gigs. The new Premier came in and said that this government was going to undergo a cultural change. This government was going to listen to people about their concerns and problems. In effect, he was bringing a new broom into this government. What have we seen? We have seen a continuation of exactly the same approach towards youth detention as we saw under the last Premier. Nothing has really changed. We are seeing exactly the same response from this minister—that is, the strongman on crime taking strong decisions against those youths.

We have heard plenty in this chamber about the government blaming other people. I will take this one on the chin. We heard the minister state that he opposed the closure of Rangeview Remand Centre. He said that was a mistake. He is correct; it was a mistake, and the shadow Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Peter Collier, has agreed that it was a mistake. We do not disagree with the minister on that, but his government has been in power for six and a half years. He said that it was a mistake, and I heard other members on the other side of the chamber interject on this and say that it was a mistake. In six and a half years, with multiple billion-dollar surpluses, no shortage of money whatsoever, and the ability to engage in the largest infrastructure program in Metronet that the Minister for Transport likes to boast about, what did the government do about this critical problem that it said was a mistake by the previous government? It did nothing in six and a half years. Now the minister says that the only choice is unit 18. We will take it on the chin; that was a mistake, but this government and this minister have done nothing in six and a half years. There are no barriers. The government owns the land. It could have corrected that mistake, as the government sees it, and, as I have said, as we on this side agree. Governments make mistakes every now and then, but this government could have corrected this mistake and it has done nothing. There is no excuse.

I will not have time to go through all this in my contribution, but the statistics are utterly damning. Hon Peter Collier, the shadow Minister for Corrective Services, asked a series of questions in the upper house. He asked how many juveniles have been placed in unit 18 in 2023, and how many attempts of self-harm or suicide have been made by those juveniles. The answer was that 46 juveniles have been placed in unit 18; four juveniles have attempted suicide and there have been six serious and 225 minor incidences of self-harm. Hon Peter Collier asked: in 2022–23, on how many occasions did a detainee spend 20 or more hours in their cells, broken down by facility and month? I will not go through each of them, but in Banksia Hill, there was a total of 6 693 incidents; in unit 18, there were 3 208 incidents over that period. If we go through the average time out of cell, we see the complete failure of unit 18. It started out with detainees having six hours out of their cells, and in the latest figures we have here, in June 2023, it was down to two hours 33 minutes.

It is quite clear and the government has demonstrable evidence that unit 18 is completely failing. That facility is not serving the purpose that it should. What has the government done in response to that? It has done nothing. It has doubled down and kept that facility. Of the juveniles in Banksia Hill, 65 per cent are Indigenous. This is a problem that disproportionately affects Indigenous youths, yet what is happening with the Broome on-country facility that was supposed to be an alternative for many of the juveniles going into detention facilities? It has not even started. I think I have heard about that facility in this place for over two years. It has not even commenced, yet we see those Indigenous youths going into that prison, and the government tells us in this place that it is critically important to prevent those youths from going deeper into crime. This Labor government has completely failed in law and order and it has completely failed the juveniles and youth in our state.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.14 pm]: I rise to support this motion —

That this house condemns the performance of the Minister for Corrective Services; Police for failing to deliver community safety across his portfolios.

In rising to speak to this motion, I note that it is very clear and we do not need to look very far to find other examples of how crime is out of control in this state and how the Minister for Police and this government are failing to rein it in. It is splashed across the front page of today's *The West Australian*, with an online headline that reads "Broome at crisis point: Horror in paradise as disturbing rise in violent alleged sex attacks exposed". The article reads —

Antisocial behaviour in the tourism mecca became so bad the council was forced to build an unsightly, barbed wire fence around its visitor centre.

It touches on the crisis as described by locals in the area of the Kimberley, as well. We are seeing a serious crisis in regions and communities across the state, particularly of violent crime. I note that the Minister for Police is always very selective when it comes to crime statistics, but we are seeing burnouts, stolen vehicles lining the streets and juvenile gangs competing online to see who can commit the most brazen offences. This situation is absolutely untenable. People are sick to death of not feeling safe in their homes or their communities. Broome is meant to be one of the tourism jewels in the crown in this state, and it is being let down by a government that cannot control

crime in this region. What must our intrastate and international visitors think when they arrive in Broome, head to the local visitors' centre and are confronted with a barbed wire fence?

This issue has not just sprung up overnight. It is not new. Since the government came to power in 2017–18, we have seen crime spiral out of control. The statistics do not lie. Broome crime statistics show that since 2017–18, violent crime is up 42 per cent, family assaults are up 64 per cent and breach of violence restraining orders are up 129 per cent. It is fair to ask: how is it that in a state as wealthy as ours, in a premier tourism region such as Broome, police have been let down by our government in such a way? On the one hand, the government is incentivising tourists to visit our region, which we obviously wholeheartedly support; however, on the other hand, the region and community is being let down in this way. Violent crime is up 42 per cent. Residents who live in the area have called it a crisis. They have described how they are at their wits' end. Multiple petitions plead for more police resources and services to deal with offenders. There is significant frustration within the police force, which feels let down by the judiciary and a system in which we see time and again violent offenders being let out from prison too early through the parole system and a light-tough approach to bail.

This is unacceptable. Regional crime statistics show that the number of offences in 2022–23 are the highest ever reported at 73 948. In 2022–23, the number of offences was up by 42 per cent in Carnarvon, 33 per cent in Kununurra, 34 per cent in Bunbury and 27 per cent in Busselton. At a state level, the statistics tell the same story. The latest statistics for the September quarter show that since this government came to power, across the state, family and domestic violence is up 45 per cent, assaults and violent crime are up 29 per cent —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Ms L. METTAM: Robberies are up by 43 per cent and sexual offences are up by 12 per cent. We know that police officers are doing the best they can and the opposition continues to advocate for better resources for our Western Australia Police Force. Questions in Parliament in March illustrated the fact that although they are doing the best they can, they need to be better resourced. We were 110 officers short across the state, across the seven regional areas. In the goldfields–Esperance region, it was 21; in the Kimberley, it was 20; in the midwest–Gascoyne, it was 20; in the south west, it was 19; in the wheatbelt, it was five; and in the Pilbara, it was 13. Across the state, we have seen the highest number of police officers leave the force in its 189-year history. Last year, 473 officers left the force. Almost 300 resigned up to October this year. As I understand it, the average is 150 a year. At the same time, the minister's response to these figures is typically very selective. These record numbers of resignations certainly point to a government that needs to do much more to support our frontline officers. They are not simply leaving for better money, as the minister has suggested in this place on other occasions. We are hearing from our frontline officers about burnout, fatigue and low morale. Multiple issues have been raised by our frontline police officers who are seeking better support. Many officers also believe their efforts are being hamstrung by court processes that too often release violent offenders too early. We have seen the tragic outcomes of that in situations in which bail is offered again and again, only to see violent offences take place. Is it any wonder that morale is so low across our police force?

As the shadow Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, the response we have heard from the minister has also been disappointing, with the number of officers dedicated to this effort going backwards. At a recent family and domestic violence summit that we all attended, one of the measures the agency specifically raised was about the importance of dedicated FDV officers and that unit. Within minutes of the minister walking out of that summit, the notion of building a dedicated team was very quickly dismissed. The approach of this minister was that it is not needed: "Nothing to see here. Any officer can do it." That the government would dismiss such a measure within moments of a summit also points to a government that has stopped listening to the concerns that we are hearing across the police force and the community. We are also hearing concerns from many advocates, whether they be in Corrective Services, our WA police, or communities that are really struggling in the Kimberley.

In light of the facts, it is extraordinary that there has been a 45 per cent increase in FDV crimes since 2017–18 and several people have died at the hands of their partners this year. This raises the question: at what point will this government take these issues seriously? I understand that the Leader of the Opposition would also like to contribute and make some comments. We have also seen such a lacklustre response when it comes to the government's GPS tracking trial. It was announced in 2020, was completed in 2021 and the government has been dragged to make a clear commitment to it. We announced we would double the number of GPS trackers and we are glad to see the government make a clearer commitment towards utilising GPS tracking when there is a breach of a violence restraining order. However, again it is a go-slow approach to an issue that should be a priority of any state government. I will leave my comments there and the Leader of the Opposition will also make a contribution.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.25 pm]: I, too, would like to make some comments on this motion —

That this house condemns the performance of the Minister for Corrective Services; Police for failing to deliver community safety across his portfolios.

It is seven years since the Labor government came to power and we still constantly hear deflection to decisions that were made prior to the seven years as being the root cause of issues that this government has been unable to address. I would ask the question of anybody living in regional communities such as Halls Creek, Broome and Kununurra whether they feel safer now than they did seven years ago.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I would suggest that the answer would be absolutely no. I would be flabbergasted if the answer was anything different.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have a point of order. I literally cannot hear the Leader of the Opposition. The other side will have half an hour to respond shortly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Cottesloe. There is no point of order but, members, he is correct in what he says—that you will get the opportunity to respond shortly. If we can hear the Leader of the Opposition in silence, that would be great. Carry on, leader.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I recently had a conversation with an accommodation provider that provides accommodation right across the towns I mentioned and others within the Kimberley. They were speaking about the need to take extra security measures with extra fencing and the use of electric fencing and razor wire in some circumstances. This is not a situation that speaks of a community that feels safe. That is a community that feels in peril. We do not see razor wire erected in West Perth. We do not see electric fencing being employed to protect the occupants of houses or industrial areas in Warnbro or Fremantle. I have spoken to people in the Kimberley and seen firsthand the evidence in their yards of multiple four-wheel drives that have been dragged from the bush as burnt-out wrecks. Children take them for joyrides. They film it on TikTok and have competitions with each other about how many cars they can do it to.

These communities are feeling enormously in peril, under stress and under siege. This minister refuses to accept that there is even an issue. I asked him about this very issue today and he deflected to that he was confident that the crime situation was under control. Maybe he should go and walk around the streets at night time to see for himself how well-controlled that crime situation is. This minister loves performing stunts for the media; I have lost count of the times we have seen him with a submachine gun or some other weapon with tactical response group forces around him, big pictures and demonstrations of going out into areas where he has been advised not to use a weapon and using that weapon. That happened around the Pearce airbase restricted area. We know that he was advised not to use a particular weapon that he used out there and he went ahead and did it for a stunt. The other day, he dragged weapons in here—home-made weapons, yes but weapons into the Parliament of Western Australia—to demonstrate what?

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It was to demonstrate what? It was to demonstrate that the people in unit 18 deserve what they get. That is what he was trying to demonstrate. When the Minister for Health was questioned today about the situation in the psychiatric ward at Perth Children's Hospital, her response was that they are difficult people. They are difficult people, but the minister has to put in place measures to protect both the staff and the people in their care. Whether it be in a hospital or a corrective facility, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that it has in place the necessary measures, practices and infrastructure to make sure that community protection is achieved. Community protection is not achieved by having people coming out—they will eventually come out—of unit 18 in a more distressed and dangerous state than they were in when they went in. This has to change. The minister has to accept that community safety is important.

I remember when the member for Cannington was the Minister for Corrective Services and he outlined his hierarchy of safety. Community safety was first, yet what was he doing? He was allowing the situation within the facility to become so out of control that those children would return to the community even more damaged than they were when they went into the facility. They cannot be in prison forever; they are going to be released into the community. The whole idea of the youth justice system is to perform rehabilitation, not just to keep people in solitary confinement for almost the whole day—22 or 23 hours a day. That is a situation that just cannot be allowed to continue.

The Premier acknowledged that when he became Premier and took a different position. He said that he was taking a different position from his predecessor on this matter, yet we are seeing the continuation of the same sorts of practices on the ground. We have a minister who does not seem to understand that he is now in charge and that decisions that were made seven years ago are no longer impacting on the situation. It is his and his department's responsibility to fix that situation, just as it is his responsibility to ensure that police have the resources and the necessary powers to keep people in regional communities safe. He has to start taking responsibility, instead of trying to deflect that responsibility onto decisions that were made in the past.

We know that the situation with youth justice is not just a police or a corrective services matter. We have been asking questions about the Target 120 program. Back in September, a question was asked of the minister about the Target 120 program in some of the communities in the Kimberley, particularly Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing. The response was that the government was still looking for the necessary staff to start the program. The program had still not commenced in September this year. This is not a government that is attacking these issues with any sense of urgency. Witness the slow response on the on-country facility, which was promised way back when Hon Alannah MacTiernan was the Minister for Regional Development. It was a regional development program. Both the Minister for Regional Development and the Premier answered in different ways a question about the progress of that facility, years after it was first promised. What do we know? It still has not even become a planning project, let alone a facility on the ground.

Where is the urgency that this government is placing on correcting the situation? Where is the urgency that this minister is placing on undertaking the measures necessary to correct the situations with crime, corrective services and family and domestic violence? Where is the evidence that he is taking responsibility? There is none. We know that last week he deflected questions in this Parliament. All week, he refused to acknowledge the media reports. He refused to comment on the media reports, but then on Friday, in an exercise of taking out the trash on a Friday afternoon, which this government has become accustomed to performing, that is exactly what he did. On Friday, he came out with the report in the hope that by Monday, something else would have happened and everybody would have forgotten. We have not forgotten. We will not forget. We will keep asking questions of this minister and about his performance. It does not matter how many times he tries to use —

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: The member had a few seconds to go and the minister continued interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Cottesloe. There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Corrective Services) [3.36 pm]: I know that the Leader of the Opposition was running out of things to say near the end and he was grasping for measures to fill the void, but his comments at the completion of his contribution were a disgrace. They were embarrassing for him. Considering the topic of the inquiry report that I released on Friday, having received it on Thursday, it is extraordinary that he should think that was an appropriate thing to say at the conclusion of his address today. I am disappointed in the member. I actually expect more of him.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you have given your contribution. For the majority of the time that opposition members spoke, they were heard in silence. I ask you to show the same courtesy to the minister in responding to what you have already contributed. Carry on, minister.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I expect more of the Leader of the Opposition. He is a mature individual; he is almost as old as I am. He has been around a little while. He has been in this place nowhere near as long as I have, but he has been around for a reasonable amount of time. I would expect more from him, particularly in his role as Leader of the Opposition.

Let us reflect a little on what the member was talking about. I know that he was not paying that much attention at the time of Cleveland's attempting to take his life. Within hours of that tragic event, when he attempted to take his life, I stood in front of the media and, in the public interest and in the interests of the Dodd family, I gave an account of what we knew—what the department advised me and what I therefore knew—to be the situation at that time. I subsequently indicated that there would be an inquiry to determine more thoroughly and more expansively the facts of the case. That inquiry is still underway, but an interim report of that inquiry was provided to me last Thursday. I read it on Thursday afternoon, and on Friday I released it to the public in the public interest and in the interests of the family. That is what actually happened.

There are still accounts to be afforded to the inquiry from many of the people directly involved. They have not yet had natural justice afforded to them, so that inquiry is not yet complete. Beyond that, on the day of Cleveland's death, a Corruption and Crime Commission inquiry was announced into misconduct around the events that led to his death. Because it was a death in custody, there will also be a coroner's inquest that will determine the cause of death and look at all the contributing factors to Cleveland's death. It is appropriate that the member apply a little bit of reticence in embarking on any effort to achieve some sort of political advantage out of this tragic situation. It is extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition, who is not new to Parliament and has been around the planet for a little while, would deem it appropriate to speak about this case in the way he has today and in the way he did last week.

It is a tragedy that Cleveland took his life in juvenile detention. There are so many tragic elements to Cleveland's story. It is so similar in many respects—almost universally—to the experience of a lot of the juveniles we encounter in our detention system. In the vast majority of cases, by the time our justice system takes responsibility for these juveniles in detention, they have already trod a really tragic path. In many cases, there has been neglect and abuse from birth, if not in the womb in the form of a mother having taken illicit drugs or alcohol during pregnancy. That is why we have such a high rate of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder inside juvenile detention. Subsequently, it is a tragic story so often in the case of many of the detainees that by the time they go into detention, they have been damaged. They are in detention because the courts have deemed them to be unsafe in the community. It is not because we want to hold them in a prison. They are there because the courts deem them to be unsafe in the community.

As I explained last week, in May there was a riot that burnt down 25 per cent of the infrastructure at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. That limited the opportunities to house the most complex and challenging and very often violent cohort of detainees. Until then, tens of millions of dollars had been invested in developing the capacity at Banksia Hill to house that cohort and to provide other opportunities or avenues for housing different cohorts within that detention facility. However, a lot of it burnt down in May. When the opposition refers to 2012 and the closure of Rangeview Remand Centre and our subsequent criticisms of the former government for making that decision, I can say that when I responded last week, I said that that decision was bad at the time. I did not attribute everything that happened subsequently to that decision. I said it was a contributing factor. Many other people, including many of the people that the member for Cottesloe referred to in his list of well-meaning and well-intentioned individuals who have commented about unit 18, attributed shutting Rangeview as being a contributing cause. Many of them have demanded that a remand centre be built. I am not of that view. What has happened in recent times has resulted in us becoming very aware of a small cohort of very challenging, complex and very often violent juveniles who must be housed in a special purpose-designed facility. We do not have one of them at the moment. The closest we have is unit 18. It is a Standards Australia maximum-security men's prison. The reason that I brought those weapons in last week was not to say that is why the detainees need to be there. I was showing members what the detainees can do to a Standards Australia maximum-security men's prison and I was pointing out the rank stupidity of the Liberal Party's suggestion that the detainees could be moved back into Banksia Hill in a demountable. Can members imagine what they would do?

Dr D.J. Honey: A secure demountable. They can build them.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can members imagine —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can members imagine what else they could do if they can do to a Standards Australia maximum-security men's facility that has had \$5 million spent on the block, which I showed the member for Cottesloe last week? It started off as a Standards Australia maximum-security men's cell. Subsequently, we spent more than \$5 million on repairing, hardening and trying to prevent the ability of the juvenile detainees who are there from destroying the place and making weapons out of it and doing harm to themselves, yet the member for Cottesloe wants us to take that cohort who can do that to that building and put them in a demountable in Banksia Hill. That is the Liberal Party's solution. There is an alternative. The opposition has provided two alternatives. One is to put them in Banksia Hill and completely compromise any efforts to rehabilitate the vast majority of the detainees, which is 69 at the moment but is close to 79 normally. The alternative the opposition provided is letting them out. There are only two alternatives. The Liberal Party of Western Australia would let the most hardened, challenging and, very often, most offending juveniles back into the community despite the fact that the courts have deemed them unsafe for the community. That is what the member is saying. There are only two choices. The Liberal Party wants to put them back into Banksia Hill and completely compromise everything that has been achieved.

With respect to the false observations made by the member for Cottesloe in his contribution, Banksia Hill has averaged between eight and nine out-of-cell hours for the last 10 weeks. We changed the practice around the detainees being moved rapidly backwards and forwards between unit 18 and Banksia Hill. They can come back from unit 18 subject to assessment by a multidisciplinary team after ensuring that it is safe to do so. As much as possible,

they assess them and determine whether or not they are suitable for return. But they are not being shuttled backwards and forwards as a matter of course and, as a consequence, for the last 10 weeks they have had between eight and nine out-of-cell hours a day at Banksia Hill. That is not the case at unit 18 because of that cohort. It is not a regime that is imposed on them. Generally, they drive the out-of-cell hours by their behaviour. It requires a range of measures to ensure that they are safe whilst they are out of their cells. Often that will mean separating them into smaller cohorts and allowing out only a small number at a time as a means of providing security for themselves so that they do not violently attack each other but also, obviously, for the staff. As a consequence, more staff are needed if they want more time out of cell.

The commissioner has informed us that the department is working on changing the practices around the management of unit 18 by separating them into three cohorts. The most problematic and challenging will be in one wing of the facility. That will probably be only a small number of individuals but with a large number of staff, replicating the sorts of measures that might be applied for a greater number at Banksia Hill. There will be an interim transition wing for movement from that really intense supervised area into moving towards less supervision, and then there will be a wing that is dedicated to a large number of juveniles who will require less supervision and therefore will have more time with potentially fewer staff supervising them and also hopefully preparing them for the environment back at Banksia Hill so they can transition back. That practice will demand additional staff. We are recruiting and training additional youth custodial officers, employing prison officers to be deployed to unit 18 in the interim and ensuring that there are specialist staff and other non-government agencies providing support in that unit. It is getting better. Increasingly, the out-of-cell hours at unit 18 are improving and increasing.

Members opposite, including the Leader of the Liberal Party and the member for Cottesloe, have lost all interest, obviously, in the detainees they were so anxious about only moments ago. They have now dismissed them entirely. They have no interest in any response about their wellbeing and no consideration for what might be done to ensure that wellbeing. I understand that. I can see that. I recognise that they really do not care. It was all for show. That is fine. I am glad that that has been revealed.

I am going to conclude by saying that we have appointed commissioner Brad Royce. He is going to be able to recruit a deputy commissioner dedicated to juveniles. We have increased staff and external provider services into unit 18. We are applying a new technique for management in unit 18—that is, separating offenders into cohorts and enabling greater supervision and more time out of cells. The commissioner will be providing additional better equipment so that staff will be provided not only with body-worn camera support, but also external support via an external command centre. Things are getting better at unit 18. It is not what we want, but we will improve it. Banksia Hill is far better. It has vastly improved, and that is a good thing. It should be celebrated and acknowledged by members opposite. For the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that there has been no change undermines the contribution and efforts of all the staff and personnel who have worked so hard to improve things in Banksia Hill and unit 18. As I said at the outset, it is disappointing that he would do that.

With respect to police, I will briefly cover the tacky and seemingly endless willingness of the Liberal Party to criticise the Western Australia Police Force regardless of how well it is performing and how good a job it is doing.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I say to the former Leader of the Liberal Party that the Western Australia Police Force rightly enjoys an excellent reputation right around the world, as evidenced by the more than 1 400 experienced officers from the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand who applied to join, and confirmed by the more than 1 600 Western Australians who applied to join our police force; the more than 400 officers under training at the academy; the 1 000 additional officers who will be graduating in the next 12 months; and by the high morale of every officer that anyone in Western Australia encounters. The suggestion that somehow our police force suffers from poor morale is pretty offensive. It is a wonderful police force. It has incredible leadership and it is performing at an exceptional level. It is resolving crime at a rate we have never seen, increasingly bringing to account criminals who in the past—only a few short years ago under the coalition government—would have been getting away with crimes and perhaps never been brought to justice. That is a great thing that we should acknowledge and applaud at every opportunity rather than criticising and disparaging the performance of the police for rank political purposes.

MS E.L. HAMILTON (Joondalup) [3.52 pm]: I rise to make a contribution today. I begin by saying that I completely disagree with the premise of those opposite. Our Cook government has and continues to invest in law and order and community safety here in WA. As the member for Joondalup, I have the privilege of having the Western Australia Police Academy located in the heart of the northern suburbs in my electorate, training our Western Australia Police Force. It opened in 2002. It is located in our learning precinct, where there is fantastic collaboration between Edith Cowan University, North Metropolitan TAFE and the police academy in Joondalup working together to ensure that we have continuing educational opportunities for those who would like to transit through those learning precincts.

Over the years, I have been to a number of different events and activities at the police academy—from graduations to police recruitment days, campaign events and the annual Joondalup police careers expo, which provides a wonderful opportunity for those who are considering wandering down the path to join the police force to see on show the training that is provided and the opportunities available that will enable them to impact our community in a positive way.

In putting forward my thoughts for this contribution today, I wanted to spend a moment on police recruiting and the important work that we have done as a government to ensure we are providing funding for more police officers. A total of 950 more police officers have come online through this government. That is a 15 per cent increase—the biggest recruitment of police in the state’s history. Around 450 additional police officers have been recruited since our government was elected. It is also important to note that the police in WA are the best equipped that they have ever been. They have at their hands world-leading technology that has resulted in record sanction rates in record times. This recruitment process has definitely put WA in a world-leading position in the work that has been done. The number of cadets coming through the police academy has increased after learning their craft. By 2024, 1 000 recruits will have gone through the academy—a doubling of capacity. Thirty-four squads of 30 recruits will begin training by mid next year, putting more police into the role of protecting the WA community than ever.

We often talk about the important role that police have in our community. We need to ensure that we give them every opportunity to receive all the training necessary. We have seen continued investment in the police academy, as I mentioned earlier. When we reflect upon the investment of this government into community safety, I looked back on announcements made around 2021 in the lead-up to the last election. At that point, our strong budget management enabled record investment into community safety with more than \$755 million added to the WA police budget since the Liberals were in government. This is significant. I am sure many members in this chamber would be able to reflect on different ways in which these community safety aspects have been delivered in their communities. At a community policing level, the member for Hillarys and I were able to secure CCTV cameras to provide support for the community, which raised hooning as a local issue, right the way through, as I said, to the statewide recruiting process for local police.

The Cook Labor government is making quite a number of other investments. For example, the government has funded builds and refurbishments of police stations. A number of new stations have been built. The Capel Police Station has been completed. The Baldivis and Forrestfield police stations will be completed by 2025. The Armadale Courthouse and Police Complex was opened in 2023. Site works are commencing for the Fremantle district police complex. A number of stations across the state have been refurbished.

I also want to focus on the extension of police station hours. Whether it is the member for Swan Hills or the member for West Swan; Deputy Premier, the Ellenbrook Police Station is open 24/7, as is the Armadale Police Station. The member for Cockburn would know how important the 24/7 police station is for his local community. Forrestfield Police Station also has extended hours. For the members for Jandakot and Southern River, Canning Vale Police Station now has extended hours. For the member for Thornlie, the Gosnells Police Station has extended hours. For the member for Rockingham, the Rockingham Police Station is also open for longer.

To condense the raft of refurbishments and investment directly into the police force into this contribution is somewhat challenging because a lot has occurred. As I said, from those larger investments right down to the community level, I am sure all of us have seen that come together in a tangible way. Standing in this place, we have seen legislation introduced to ensure that we are assisting with community safety. Laws have been passed that make it harder and more difficult for drug trafficking to occur within the state with the introduction of border search laws. We have the ability to address organised crime now, with the Attorney General bringing legislation into this place. Amendments will be made to the Firearms Act 1973. The Minister for Police; Corrective Services is looking to rewrite the Firearms Act. A whole host of investments have been made. I reiterate the sentiments of the Minister for Corrective Services that we have a fantastic police force in WA. Every time I hear those on the other side talking about police officers in the way they do, I do not think that does them justice for the role they undertake. I acknowledge the fantastic work of our police force in keeping our community safe.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Treasurer) [3.59 pm]: I thank the member for Joondalup for her contribution. She clearly outlined the level of resourcing and presence the police force has in Western Australia, the new police stations being built or have been built, the extended hours of many police stations across the state, and the record investment in our police service in WA through this and previous ministers. I again acknowledge the work of the new and previous police minister to ensure that our police force is well funded, well organised and out there helping deliver community safety. I want to address some of the opposition’s comments in its “Have a Go MPI” today. I do not think this should be called a matter of public interest. It should be “Have a Go Day” on a Tuesday.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Pardon? “Have a Go Day”.

Ms A. Sanderson: Participation.

Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Paul Papalia; Ms Emily Hamilton; Ms Rita Saffioti

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is a participation award for which they all come in.

Dr D.J. Honey: We all have things to do afterwards, unlike you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Harsh words!

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know what the member for Cottesloe is trying to do. He is trying to stop homes being built in Western Australia; that is what he is busy doing. He has got things to do! I love that the member for Cottesloe said that the government was flat and had no energy. However, members on the other side are all looking down at their phones and disinterested in their own motion put forward in their own MPI. I do not know if members remember Roy and HG. When the member for Cottesloe said that we look flat and disinterested, I thought he should go into a hall of mirrors and take a look at himself. Roy and HG used to say that all the time about people making comments full of hypocrisy.

We heard today a rerun of last week with a few new twists, and the opposition today introduced the concept of the police force not doing enough. It has now insulted not only prison officers, but also the police force. It has extended its level of criticism. We heard today of the new concept of a secure demountable. The opposition's initiative is to move detainees, who the Minister for Corrective Services rightly highlighted last week can make anything into a weapon, from a prison built to Australian standards in relation to —

Mr P. Papalia: An adult male maximum-security prison.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: — an adult male maximum-security prison, to the opposition's demountable, which will be more secure. Today we heard that somehow the opposition will build a demountable more secure than unit 18 at Casuarina Prison. That is what it will do. It says detainees should not be in a secure facility, and now it says it will create a secure demountable that will be more secure than unit 18. The other side of politics has again demonstrated "Have a Go Day". It has once again demonstrated a lacklustre MPI by bringing in no new arguments.

I am glad that I do not subscribe to *The West Australian*. The only reason I do not need to is that the member for Vasse comes and just reads out the articles. It saves me two dollars a day. It is like having a podcast! We sit here listening to the member for Vasse read out articles verbatim. I do not know; maybe the member for Vasse should have a podcast. I know the member for Cottesloe does!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Extensively subscribed.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. It is extensively subscribed. You guys should run podcasts! The member for Cottesloe can say how we should not support any developments in the state, and the member for Vasse can read out the article. Like I say, I am glad she is saving us some money as we do not need to subscribe to *The West Australian*.

Honestly, the opposition's approach jeopardises community safety. The Liberal Party's approach jeopardises the safety of facility workers and fellow detainees. That it is what it is doing. It highlighted today that it is not on the side of community safety, the safety of workers or detainees undergoing rehabilitation programs. The opposition will jeopardise the rehabilitation of other detainees in Banksia Hill Detention Centre.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr D.A.E. Scaife) casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

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

Noes (43)

Mr G. Baker	Ms E.L. Hamilton	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Mr D.A.E. Scaife
Ms L.L. Baker	Ms M.J. Hammat	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms J.J. Shaw
Ms H.M. Beazley	Ms J.L. Hanns	Mr D.R. Michael	Ms R.S. Stephens
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr M. Hughes	Ms L.A. Munday	Dr K. Stratton
Ms C.M. Collins	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr H.T. Jones	Mr P. Papalia	Mr D.A. Templeman
Ms L. Dalton	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr P.C. Tinley
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr J.R. Quigley	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr M.J. Folkard	Ms A.E. Kent	Ms R. Saffioti	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms K.E. Giddens	Mr P. Lilburne	Ms A. Sanderson	

Question thus negated.