

**CRIME — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

*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 Opposition seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

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

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition)** [2.55 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the McGowan Labor government to stand up for Western Australia and demand that its colleagues in the federal government deliver funding for communities impacted by crime and invest in increased measures and support for police on the ground dealing with these issues.

We have just heard the Premier in question time refer to the situation in Carnarvon. We know that Carnarvon is one of the many communities across Western Australia that have been severely impacted by a rising tide of crime and lawlessness. We now have the situation that our police officers are under such pressure that they are resigning from the Western Australia Police Force in record numbers, as referred to by the Leader of the Liberal Party in question time. We know that they are doing that because they feel that they are not being supported by this government. Their morale is at an all-time low because of the lack of support from the minister. This is the same minister who in his response to the Premier's Statement noted —

... the opposition has resorted to extreme, overblown, false language to describe what is happening in Western Australia ...

The modus operandi of this government seems to be to pretend that there is not a problem.

Today, I asked the Minister for Community Services a question about the Target 120 program. I got the same sort of response from her—that we are trying to run down communities. We are not doing anything of the sort. Nine communities have been funded for Target 120 to be rolled out. When I asked a question about this, I found out that only one placement has been made in those nine locations. That announcement was made in May last year, yet only one person has come into the Target 120 fold. The purpose of the Target 120 program is to divert young people from a life of criminality. Whole communities are being engulfed in criminality. The police do not want to work in those areas because they are being hunted like animals by people in LandCruisers —

**Mr P. Papalia:** Where? Which town?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** In all the communities that we know this rise in crime is occurring, whether it be Carnarvon, Halls Creek or Kununurra—you name it. These people are now out of control. There needs to be action by the Minister for Police and for him to accept that there is a problem. The minister does not seem to accept that there is a problem within the force.

I asked the Premier, just before, whether he had been consulted about the cashless debit card. Apparently he had not been, even though the federal government says that all states were consulted. I do not know at what level the federal government communicated with the McGowan government, but that is the statement that the federal minister has made. If the Premier was consulted, I would like to know what the answer would have been. Does the Premier support the cashless debit card, or does he not? The Premier is in the chamber and he can respond about whether he believes that program had some success. I know that the federal Labor Party was very keen to do away with the cashless debit card. When that matter went through the Senate, the Western Australian senators were high-fiving each other about their success in getting rid of the cashless debit card.

What have we seen since then? We have seen whole communities being engulfed in alcohol-fuelled violence. Children and women are not safe. There is no safety for them in those communities. Businesses are having multiple break-ins. Very recently, there was a report from Carnarvon of a particular business that has had repeated break-ins. This report is from Sunday, so this was after the Premier's visit last week. I note that the Premier finally went to Carnarvon, after many requests from the member for North West Central to do just that and see for himself the situation that has got out of control in that town. We know that these businesses are being targeted and that they have had so many break-ins they can no longer get insurance. They are now bearing the cost of every repeat event that takes place.

Despite all the publicity and all the requests made in this place, the Minister for Police continues to believe that this is somehow a campaign by the opposition to denigrate the communities involved. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are standing up for those communities. We are acting as the voice for those communities. The president of the Shire of Laverton has been seeking support, but no support has come from this government to his shire. The Prime Minister went to the goldfields and did not even get in touch with the president of the Shire of Laverton, as I understand. It is all very well for the Prime Minister to fly into and fly out of Western Australia, but if he is not

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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listening to what is happening nor communicating with people on the ground, there is no benefit to Western Australia in him coming. Since the cashless debit card was removed, this situation has been out of control, not just in Western Australia, but also right across regional Australia. In fact, the community of Alice Springs was in such trouble that it managed to get the Prime Minister to make a very quick visit to see for himself the distress put upon the community and the tide of woe that had engulfed Alice Springs. That led to an announcement of \$250 million, which was put into the community for a series of programs. Some of the things promised from the \$250 million contribution from the federal government to Alice Springs include job creation, better services, preventing and addressing issues caused by foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, investing in families, and on-country learning.

That \$250 million is being invested into the Northern Territory. I understand the Premier and the Prime Minister have now spent time together in Port Hedland. I wonder, did the Premier ask the Prime Minister if he would assist Western Australia in a similar way to what he has done in the Northern Territory? Will there be an investment of \$250 million into Western Australia? That would be a step towards undoing the damage that he has wrought upon Western Australia by removing the cashless debit card from areas that desperately needed it in place. The Premier had that opportunity. I would very much like to hear from the Premier whether he has approached the Prime Minister for support for the communities. The debit card was removed, no services were installed to take its place and no support was given to communities to prepare for that change. We have seen the result. It is an appalling situation that no-one could possibly be proud of having wrought upon our country.

When it comes to crime rates, statistically we know that regional areas are already disadvantaged as opposed to metropolitan areas. Based on the monthly crime rates for the first half of the 2022–23 year, metropolitan against regional figures, the rate of homicides in the metropolitan area of Perth is 0.9 per 100 000 people. In regional Western Australia, it is 4.8 per 100 000 people—more than five times greater. Recent sexual offences are at 73.6 per 100 000 in Perth as opposed to 148 in the regions. Family assaults are at 350 in Perth, with 1 201 in the regions. Assaults, non-family, in Perth are 238 per 100 000 people, and 469 in the regional areas. Many other statistics are just as damning, but I go back to domestic and family assault, with 350 cases per 100 000 in Perth, and 1 201 in the regions.

That is a desperate situation that calls for desperate measures. It calls for a government that will take responsibility and step up to the plate to help those communities, just as the previous government attempted to do when it brought in the cashless debit card, which was accompanied by a whole raft of wraparound services introduced when it was brought into a community. Now we are not seeing the support for those communities or the government taking responsibility for the situation. We are seeing ministers who duckshove the responsibility away from them, and in whole communities, people do not feel safe in their homes. They do not feel safe in the streets. These are quiet little country communities that should be havens of peace. They should not be turned into battlefields. That is what they have become. People in the communities are fighting amongst themselves, breaking into each other's homes and businesses, attacking police with motorcars and hunting them down. This is something that we would see in a movie such as *Mad Max*. The communities in much of regional WA are out of control. This is an urgent situation. It needs both spheres of the government, federal and state, to communicate with each other and bring in measures that will address the situation.

I heard the Prime Minister say that he is someone who sticks by his commitments and would not leave anybody behind. I would say that he has left many regional residents of WA behind. He has ignored them and it has led to a situation in which their towns and communities have become engulfed in alcohol, violence and despair. I cannot, for the life of me, understand how any member of Parliament could think that was a good outcome. I do not know why the federal government felt pride in undoing a program that was making a difference.

I read a report in *The Guardian*, of all things—hardly a right-wing publication. Although it claims that the cashless debt card could not be proven to have a beneficial effect, it says —

... there was “consistent and clear evidence that alcohol consumption has reduced since the introduction of the CDC in the trial sites”.

That was reporting on a government report that could not actually quantify the evidence around the effectiveness of the cashless debit card, but it pointed to the fact that there had been a reduction in alcohol consumption and in alcohol-related issues in those communities. If there was no clear evidence that the card was having a positive effect when it was in place, there has certainly been very clear evidence since the removal of the card that it is desperately needed. I am calling for the Premier and his government to make an immediate call on the Albanese government to undo the damage it has done, to reverse its decision, and to reintroduce the card and services that go with the card, even if that means going cap in hand to the Albanese government and asking for the same level of support that the Northern Territory has received in its situation, which is no more dire than the situation in Western Australia. In fact, I would say that because of Western Australia's diverse landscape and the number of communities that are affected, its situation is probably even worse than the Northern Territory's. We have problems

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and Gascoyne, and now there are reports of it spreading into the midwest. We urgently need to not only act to protect the communities, but also remember that many of the people who are involved in this are victims themselves.

We cannot blame someone who has an issue with alcohol for using alcohol. We have to help them. What this government and its federal government colleagues are doing is not helping them. It is not helping anybody; it is not helping the communities. I think it is time that we all, as a community, work to address this issue together. This is not about us blaming the McGowan government; it is us asking the McGowan government to act constructively, stop blaming communities for the issue, and stop blaming local members who come forward and point out the issues. Take the issue seriously and put in place measures required to address them.

Measures such as the Target 120 program would be suitable and could be rolled out, but I suspect no services are available in a lot of those communities to roll out such programs. Regional areas actually have to have staff. One thing that has been consistently pointed out to me over the last number of years is the demise of local leadership at a government level in many regional areas. We are seeing the smaller regional towns lose key personnel and become a drive-in, drive-out situation. No-one lives in the town, so no-one is there after hours. They are all back in the major communities; for example, they have gone back to Geraldton instead of staying in Carnarvon. A fleet of white vehicles drives in and out of each of these communities, and no actual progress is made towards curing the communities' situation, which needs to be addressed. We need an urgent investment in staff and leadership in the communities. We need people there who can make decisions and can bring together key people in the community. Employers, businesses, government providers and local government all will need to be in this together, working for the good of their communities.

Of course, in areas where we have significant Aboriginal populations, members of that Aboriginal community need to be involved in the response. We need to be working with key members of Aboriginal communities in regional areas, instead of imposing solutions on them, which is often the way things are done. In fact, it always seems to be the way things are done. We need to start listening to them. We know that people out there are willing to help. They know their communities, are desperate to help their communities and wish to have help from this government, but no help has been brought to them.

The Minister for Community Services' Target 120 program has put one child in Broome. Out of the nine expanded sites, only one child has actually been given any assistance and has been helped away from crime. It is not good enough. It has been a year, and the government needs to get on and get the services into the communities instead of just promising them. Making announcements does not help anybody. The key focus of this government should be working on the ground, investing in the communities and bringing about solutions to undo the damage that has been done by alcohol, especially recently. The minister, the Minister for Police and other ministers should stop blaming the communities and other members.

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party)** [3.12 pm]: I rise to support this motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I certainly back up the calls for the Premier to stand up for Western Australia and the community of Laverton. Laverton has seen the extraordinary cost of the cashless debit card's removal, without any alternative solution being provided.

Early last week, I had the great opportunity to speak to Shire of Laverton president Patrick Hill and to Janice Scott, an elder from the Laverton community, about what they have seen and are experiencing on the ground, and what has been exacerbated since the cashless debit card was removed. What they described is alcohol-fuelled violence and out-of-control crime. The women in the town feel particularly vulnerable. They have urged for a rethink of that decision or an alternative solution. That is why it has been so disappointing. Somehow, this community was not important enough or those concerns were not stark enough to garner the attention of the federal government and the Prime Minister. The Laverton community is bearing the cost of the removal of the cashless debit card, without any alternative solution.

The Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier a fair question today in question time about what the Premier's response was when consulted by the federal minister about the removal of the cashless card. It is a fair question. We know the Premier is one of the most powerful leaders that the state has ever seen. We know this by the number of members in the house, by what he has been able to achieve through the COVID period and by his influence with the federal government. It is fair that we also ask what this Premier is doing to stand up for that community and seek the financial support that the Northern Territory was able to obtain, in the wake of the violence we see right across the state—in particular, in the Shire of Laverton—from the federal government's decision. Also, some fair questions were asked today about the adequacy of the Target 120 program. It has been revealed that the program has supported only one child across nine different areas. That is quite concerning.

I also rise to talk about the importance of supporting our police. We know police are voting with their feet and are leaving the force in droves. The number of police leaving the force was 473 officers, about three times the average.

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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Questions in the other place also revealed that at the end of last year, of the 182 vacancies, 96 were in the regions. We know our police officers are doing it extraordinarily tough, particularly under this government.

**Mr M.J. Folkard:** That's not true. They have got more from this government than you ever did.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I am not taking interjections.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Burns Beach!

**Mr M.J. Folkard** interjected.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I am not taking interjections.

*Point of Order*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The member is trying to make her contribution. The member for Burns Beach will have the opportunity to make a contribution after she has concluded. I ask that you bring him to order.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member. I shall not uphold the point of order but, member for Burns Beach, please stop interjecting. The Leader of the Liberal Party has indicated that she is not taking interjections.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms L. METTAM:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker. It is quite clear that our police officers are under extraordinary pressure and do not feel that this government has their back. In 2019, 777 officers sought mental health support, but in 2021, 2 600 sought support. That is triple the number, or a 300 per cent increase, of mental health cases. This reflects the extraordinary pressure that police feel on the ground. That is why the WA Police Union is calling for support for the Switch Off Duty campaign. It is fighting for the right for officers to disconnect from their phones and emails when they are off duty, as an opportunity to provide much-needed relief when they have finished work. A survey of 2 000 police officers last year showed almost 80 per cent did not believe enough was being done to support their mental health and welfare. That goes straight to the point that we have made. In addition, a staggering 64 per cent viewed the morale in the Western Australia Police Force as poor.

The Western Australia Police Force has highlighted a number of needs. It certainly does not help when it is also asked to help our run-down health system as well. We know that last year WA police was charged with providing medical tasks—175 code 83 medical tasks—until WAPOL pushed back on that. It illustrated how the crisis in our hospitals put extraordinary pressure on our police. Quite clearly, WA police did not sign up to be ambulance drivers. WA police has asked for support through better training, improved resources and increased protections in relation to a number of incidents. *The West Australian* published an article about various high-speed chases and what has been termed “boxing in”. The feedback from WA police officers was that they want dash cams, as have been utilised in other states. We know that 26 officers who were involved in high-speed chases are now being investigated with 92 breaches of police policy. The offence carries a maximum of a \$6 000 fine and a six-month licence disqualification. Police have called for training, resources, support and some clarification around that. It is not much to ask. We know WA police do an extraordinary job in protecting our community. We know that they are facing significant challenges out there on the ground, not only in regional WA. We have touched on the impacts that we are seeing in Laverton and Carnarvon and other regions. Despite the government spin on crime statistics, violent crime is about 13.9 per cent above the five-year average. Family-related offences are 34.9 per cent above the five-year average. They are undertaking an extraordinary job in protecting our community.

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The Leader of the Liberal Party is just subject to a constant barrage of interjections from a number of members from the other side, so much so that I can barely hear what she is saying when I am sitting right next to her.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Kingsley! Members, I would like to remind you that points of order will be heard in silence without any contributions from anyone else. Member, there is no point of order. People are commenting along the way. There are no direct interjections. Members, if you could let the Leader of the Liberal Party finish in silence, the government will then have the opportunity to respond to what she is saying. Carry on, Leader of the Liberal Party.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms L. METTAM:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The opposition alliance supports our police officers. We support our policemen and policewomen. We want to ensure that they are properly supported. Dash cams have been adopted in other states, including New South Wales

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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and Tasmania, and these resources have helped significantly. We have also supported specific laws in relation to the ramming of officers. That has been a significant issue. In February 2021, the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council released a report on this issue and made some recommendations and we certainly support —

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Liberal Party, hold on for two seconds. Member for Girrawheen, I call you for the first time. Member for Burns Beach, I call you for the first time.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I hate to canvass your ruling, Deputy Speaker, but it is member for Landsdale.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Sorry; member for Landsdale. Apologies. Carry on, leader.

**Ms L. METTAM:** We know at least 15 police vehicles were hit by cars in this way last year, and we know that this is a significant issue. It is quite clear that WA police do not feel that this government has their back. It is quite clear that despite the spin from the government, the increasing rates of violent crime are a significant concern. There is clearly a great opportunity for this government to better support our community.

**Mr M.J. Folkard** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Burns Beach, I call you for the second time.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Our regional communities and our Perth communities could be better supported. On Australia Day, we saw brawls and violent and antisocial behaviour across Perth and in Rockingham. It is not good enough.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Ms L. METTAM:** In a state as prosperous as ours, it is essential that the government provides better support.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mandurah, I call you for the first time.

**Ms L. METTAM:** There is certainly an opportunity for the Premier to stand up for Western Australia, particularly on the back of decisions of the federal government that have been extraordinarily damaging. He should listen to these communities and seek the sort of financial support that our Prime Minister has been able to provide to the Northern Territory and see that that vital funding is also provided. The \$250 million for the Northern Territory should also be provided for our desperate regional communities. Our small business operators do not feel safe. People in these communities do not feel safe in their homes. I agree with the Premier that parents need to be parents, but we are seeing communities that do not feel safe. There is a great opportunity to ensure that the federal government provides better support.

**MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier)** [3.26 pm]: Just to reiterate, I had the opportunity earlier today to visit the Pilbara with the Prime Minister and federal cabinet. I had the opportunity to speak and address the federal cabinet about a range of Western Australian issues. I think it was very worthwhile and terrific that the federal cabinet made the decision to come to Western Australia and go to the goldfields and also the Pilbara. For that, it should be congratulated. I think there has been a lot of rubbish spoken about it, to be honest. The idea that we have to visit every single town in Western Australia, which seems to be the theme, is quite obviously preposterous and ludicrous and cannot be achieved by anyone at any time. It is great that federal cabinet went to the major communities in the goldfields and one of the major communities in the Pilbara.

There were two actual outcomes of the meeting today. One is obviously that the entire federal cabinet got to see the industry of the Pilbara in operation because we had our meeting in the shipping control tower in Port Hedland, looking out on the tide as ships were leaving for their destinations in Asia, most probably. They got to experience and see that. The second is that we got to announce a \$560 million joint project, which is terrific and means an expanded capacity of the harbour in Hedland, particularly for freight, and, particularly for manufacturing and manufactured goods; lithium; and blades for wind turbines. As we move more into hydrogen and we need more renewable energy and industry needs more renewable energy, we will have a loading point, or a port, that will take that sort of material. It was a terrific visit and worthwhile for Western Australia, and I am pleased that that joint announcement was able to be made. That is the first point: there is investment by the commonwealth in remote communities or regional Western Australia out of this very significant amount of \$560 million, which dwarfs the amounts that members opposite were referring to in other states and territories. I am very pleased it decided to make that commitment.

Between the state and commonwealth governments, different levels of government have different responsibilities. Sometimes they overlap and sometimes they are different. The commonwealth government runs the welfare system. We do not run it. We do not have access to it. It is another level of government as prescribed by the Constitution. The welfare system is based upon a whole range of things that the commonwealth has access to, but, in particular, people's financial details, tax records and so forth; therefore, the commonwealth can run that. We cannot run it. We do not run it. It is up to the commonwealth what it does in that regard. But what we can do is in whatever areas

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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are within our responsibility. That is why the issue of alcohol in regional communities has come more into focus recently. Some issues out there are in areas in which we can undertake activity and that we have responsibility for. I am happy to discuss those. I am happy to discuss what has occurred around Western Australia. I was once the Minister for Racing and Gaming—back in the 2000s. In 2005–06, I put in place a lot of reforms to the civil laws of the state. One of the things that we did was to enhance the capacity for individual communities to make their own decisions about alcohol. I might note that the National Party voted against, and the Liberal Party opposed until the last moment, the 2005–06 reforms. It was quite a battle that I had to go through back then to get reforms through Parliament so that small bars and restaurants could serve liquor without a meal. It was quite a battle. The National Party held out right to the end and voted against the reforms. The Liberal Party members spent 18 months campaigning against the reforms and flipped at the last moment. I was pleased that they flipped. It gave us the support we needed. We now have 250 or so small bars across Western Australia because of those reforms that we got through despite the then opposition.

One of the things that we did was to enhance the capacity for Indigenous communities—in particular, remote communities—to basically become dry. We had a whole range of measures that the remote communities could put in place to guide their own destiny. A whole range of communities out there are dry because of those reforms that we put in place 16 or 17 years ago. Those reforms have been a success.

In terms of the other aspects of the liquor reforms, obviously the director of Liquor Licensing and, more broadly, the Liquor Commission have capacity to put in place various rules around the state. These are put in place sometimes by agreement and sometimes by force. Often, the agreed rules occur when there is an accord. An accord means that every provider of liquor—in a regional community, in particular—might agree on a certain set of rules, and they say, “In our town, we will have these rules that apply to all of us.” That accord will limit the times that alcohol can be sold, how much can be sold at any one point in time and what sort of packaging might be involved. A whole range of things will be limited by agreement across the providers of alcohol in a certain community, and that would apply to bottle shops, pubs and restaurants or whatever it might be. They will all agree. That is called a liquor accord, and they are in place around Western Australia.

Other rules in place in various communities have been put in place by the director of Liquor Licensing. Across the Kimberley, members will find that there is a range of communities that are dry, and they will find a range of communities that have had these rules put in place by the director of Liquor Licensing—and the same goes for various parts of the Pilbara and goldfields. These are things within the state’s control that we can do.

As I said the other day, one issue that has been brought to my attention is the community of Carnarvon. I went to Carnarvon early last year. I went back again last Friday. I have been to Carnarvon, I do not know, maybe 20 or 30 times in my life; I am not sure. I have been many, many times. The issues in Carnarvon around alcohol are a little bit different from other places in that Carnarvon has never had restrictions. If members go to Pilbara communities, they will find that there are all sorts of rules in place. It is the same in the goldfields and the Kimberley. Carnarvon has never had restrictions, certainly not in living memory, and so it is a bit different. It is essentially open slather in that community. I learnt a few things whilst I was there.

I met with the shire council. I met with senior police officers, both local and district. I met with community service senior public servants. I met with all the people who work at the police and community youth centre and other community organisations, and then I met with a group of Aboriginal leaders in Carnarvon. I want to tell members what was told to me about Carnarvon because that has been the issue until now, and I want to tell members what was said there.

Firstly, the advice of the shire council was that the police are doing a great job in Carnarvon, and that additional resources are welcome. That was the advice from the council. But, then, uniformly, the advice was—this is across all those groups I mentioned—too much alcohol is causing too much harm, and there has been no success in achieving, up until last week, a liquor accord. There has been no success. A liquor accord, I am advised, was agreed to last week. I will talk to members about that in the moment. Up until then, there had been a couple of bottle shops and one hotel in particular that held out against a liquor accord to try to put rules in place. That issue was commonly discussed amongst those people in those meetings I held. There were perhaps three of those providers of alcohol that held out against a liquor accord, against all the others who wanted to reach an agreement.

Why did they do that? The advice that was given to me was greed. That is what I was advised by people in these meetings. The reason that some people refused to agree to a liquor accord was greed. What does that mean? The community can either continue on the current trajectory or it can take action. The government can look at what action we can take. I went for a drive around town—I have driven around Carnarvon numerous times—and I saw a few streets that were obviously very, very problematic. Some of the damage done to houses, roads, public facilities and fences and so forth was really quite noticeable. It was quite awful, actually. Those things that have occurred are particularly related to the abuse of alcohol in that community, where restrictions have never been in place.

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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Last week, I learnt that upon the news that the Minister for Racing and Gaming and I were attending the communities, there had suddenly been a change of heart and there was rapid agreement for a liquor accord. The hold-outs had agreed to a liquor accord in Carnarvon. I was given details of what the accord would be in Carnarvon, which I will provide to the house.

Point one: cask wine is to be sold in no larger than two-litre packages, with a minimum price point of \$15. The licensee is to be given adequate time to run out of existing stock. In other words, a 750 millilitre bottle will cost \$5, in effect. That is the first point of the liquor record.

Point two: bottled wine is to have an agreed minimum price point, pending Australian Competition and Consumer Commission approval and confirmation by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' racing, gaming and liquor. Therefore, there will be an agreed price point for bottled wine, pending all those things.

Point three: taxis will not be served in drive-throughs without patrons first exiting the taxi to provide staff the ability to assess intoxication. Disabled patrons are exempt from this requirement.

Point four: takeaway ready-to-drink products are to be limited to one sixpack from takeaway outlets after 8.00 pm.

Point five: when a takeaway ready-to-drink product is available in cans, it should not be sold in glass containers. The licensee is to be given adequate time to run out of existing stock.

That is it. That is the response to what has been going on. To describe this as pathetic would be a compliment. That is what the licensees who held out from the accord were prepared to agree to. In my view, that is beyond pathetic. As if that will make any difference whatsoever to what is going on there. Clearly that is not acceptable and clearly if they think a last-minute capitulation to an accord because the minister and I were visiting Carnarvon will somehow pacify or resolve the issue, they are wrong—particularly the hold-outs. As I said, I was advised that the hold-outs were one pub and two bottle shops. What does that mean? That means that we will examine what else can be done in Carnarvon. As I said, the town has never had restrictions in place before, certainly not in everyone's memory, so it will become a test case for what we can do for a community that has not had restrictions in place. We will look at Carnarvon on that basis.

Obviously, I expect that some of the licensees, particularly the licensees of the pub and a couple of bottle shops that disagree with this, will now be stamping their feet, running to their representative organisations, complaining and so forth. They had the opportunity for years, particularly since this issue became more elevated in the public recently, to do something about it, and they did not. To come up with this pathetic list of things that it calls an accord obviously shows that they had no intention of improving their behaviour. That is why the government will now look at it far more closely. As I said, we will look at what else we can do about this and whether it then serves as a model that we might be able to roll out to other communities around the state, but we will see.

I wanted to make another point. I had a meeting with senior Aboriginal leaders from the five language groups. There would have been five, six or seven people and then a range of support organisations at Gwoonwardu Mia, the wonderful museum in Carnarvon. It was a terrific meeting. I want to make one point. These people were real leaders. They were so keen to get their community back on track. A very strong message was expressed to me by at least four of the people there. They said to me—I do not think they have seen the media I have been involved in—that the kids are not the problem; the parents are. Indigenous people were saying this to me, one after another. As I said recently in a different forum about the whole community, whoever they are, parents need to parent. When they were discussing some of the antisocial activities and so forth in Carnarvon and surrounds, they were the words they used with me. I think that shows that the message and the culture around everyone—I am not selecting anyone or any particular race—needs to be that parents have a responsibility to take care of their children and make sure they have a safe bed, they are fed, they go to school and they get some love and attention. That is what parenting is. I know there is a lot of talk around this issue and a lot of debate but I think it is a statement of the bleeding obvious—that parents need to parent. I think it is an ordinary statement of fact. As I said to members, Aboriginal leaders were on the ground in Carnarvon with lots of issues using virtually the same form of words that I used. I make the point that across the state, and I expect across the nation, the ordinary commonsense position is that. Those people who rebel against it do not do anyone any service because that needs to be our culture. That needs to be Australia's culture; it needs to be everyone's culture—that parents have a responsibility to do those things. In any event, that was a slight digression from the issue, but I thought it was important to make the point that that was the message I received up there.

As I pointed out, there are things that the state is responsible for and there are things that the commonwealth is responsible for. We are employing more police and we are doing more about all these issues and we will continue to do so.

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police)** [3.43 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to join the Premier in responding to this matter of public interest. I would like to echo the Premier's observations on Carnarvon. I went there three times in my first year in this role—in June, September and November—and then most recently I returned

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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in January. On every occasion, I met with police and community leaders. Universally, the response and the observation made by those local people confronting their challenges was that alcohol is the driver of the problem. I have also heard directly from the people responsible for attacking the challenge of crime in the community that there has been no support for a liquor accord. There has not been a liquor accord. In fact, there have been efforts to undermine the formation and practice of a liquor accord until very recently, as we heard from the Premier, whereupon some pretty limited measures were proposed. That is disappointing. As the Premier indicated, the Premier and the Minister for Racing and Gaming are likely to take action. That will not necessarily be what the members of the liquor accord would appreciate, but it will be necessary to respond. Some of those people were the same people complaining about crime in the community. Some of those people on the present liquor accord were the ones complaining that not enough effort was being put into responding to crime.

I want to put on the record that the Carnarvon police have been outstanding in delivering an excellent service to their community, as has the regional superintendent, Steve Post, and his team. They have not been wanting for police resources. Operation Regional Shield was dedicated to that area for some time. Subsequently, in recent times the district superintendent ensured that additional officers and staff from Geraldton are deployed as necessary to back up and support Carnarvon police officers. It has not been about police resources; it has been about the challenge associated with the harmful use of alcohol. Some of the people who have been complaining most vocally in this place and in Carnarvon about the impact of crime on their communities have been the ones affording the opportunity for people to abuse alcohol. This is pretty disappointing. That has to be placed on the record. I absolutely back the Premier's observations.

*Point of Order*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The minister appears to be referring to a member of this place. I want to point out that he is making some very serious accusations here. The member is not present. I am not sure what the minister's aim is here. I think he is straying from the discussion point altogether, which is about this government and its reaction to the situation of crime in the community.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The minister can continue but just be cautious.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The point of order was almost longer than the member's inaugural speech.

I think the Leader of the Opposition knows what I am saying when I say that there has been vocal criticism of the police and the service delivered to the people of Carnarvon. Many of the people who have been making those complaints in Carnarvon in particular have been some of the people who were responsible for supplying alcohol to the community. I have said enough in that regard.

I need to address another claim that was made by the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the claim he made about some police officers refusing to serve in some towns in Western Australia. That cannot go unchallenged. There is no part of Western Australia that the Western Australia Police Force will not police. The Western Australia Police Force delivers a world-class service. Its officers are willingly posted to all corners of this enormous state and jurisdiction. It is outrageous that the Leader of the Opposition would suggest somehow that there is some part of the state —

**Mr R.S. Love:** I've been told that directly by members of the police force.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Who told you that about police officers? The Leader of the Opposition is making a claim in this place based on an anonymous "officer" that he claims to have spoken to, suggesting that police officers are refusing to serve in towns in this state. Which towns? I am not asking which officer, but which towns? Which towns do officers refuse to serve in, member? That is an outrageous comment and an unsubstantiated claim, and the member should withdraw it.

**Mr R.S. Love:** I am not withdrawing it.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Unless the member is willing to name the town that he thinks members of the Western Australia Police Force are refusing to police, he cannot make that claim.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Of course he can.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No, he cannot. He can refuse to name the individual who supposedly said it.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Deputy Speaker, let me put on the record that there is not a town in Western Australia that the Western Australia Police Force will not police. That is just a ridiculous comment and I cannot believe that the member said it.



Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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Secondly, there have been various references to Carnarvon. Let me put on the record that the cashless debit card program was never in place in Carnarvon. That is a federal issue. As the Premier said, we are not responsible for welfare. It is not our responsibility at state level to even address that matter, but that aside —

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** — it is very tenuous to make a link between the removal of CDC and crime somehow being worse in Carnarvon, because CDC was never there. There were never cashless debit cards in Carnarvon.

I think that both members who spoke made other observations about Laverton. I will read some comments about Laverton that members might be interested in —

A Northern Goldfields shire is crying out for immediate action as its health and emergency services drown in demand from an influx of people “wreaking havoc” on its town.

Shire of Laverton president Patrick Hill said “fights, women being bashed and children running around at all hours” were plaguing Laverton since some people from the ... Lands arrived in town, “bringing a lot of cash with them and spending it on the wrong things”.

That observation was not made post—the removal of CDC. That observation was made in 2019 by shire president Patrick Hill. I understand that Laverton confronts some challenges. They are the challenges that the Premier referred to. They are the consequence of a couple of hundred years of disempowerment, disruption and vulnerability in communities, and those communities then being exposed to the availability of alcohol. The people on the lands go into Laverton and Leonora to seek out alcohol, and Laverton is the place that we are referring to. It was pretty bizarre to see the leader of the federal opposition go to Laverton as though he were somehow providing some great revelation in the challenges that that town confronts when the people from the lands come in to drink harmfully in the liquor outlets or get takeaway liquor from those liquor outlets in the town, because it is a challenge. I am not saying it is not a challenge. It has been a challenge for a long time; it continues to be a challenge. The method that may be employed to address the challenge may be the one that the Premier is referring to. Mr Hill out there in the shire might consider that if Carnarvon ends up receiving a more robust response to takeaway alcohol from the director of Liquor Licensing, it might also be applied in other places that are confronting the same challenge, because we have the power to do that. The challenge that has been brought to our attention is the challenge of alcohol and the harmful use of alcohol. Mr Hill complained about the same thing in 2019, when there was a conservative federal government. Rather than just jump into the space of politicising a challenge, he might want to consider what the response might be from the government. We are the state government; we have responsibility for policing.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Are you going to go to Laverton? Are you going to go out there and have a chat with him?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I was in Leonora on 11 September last year.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Are you going to Laverton?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I was in Laverton on 11 September last year, and I will tell members who I spoke to.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, just hold on for two seconds, please.

Leader of the Opposition, you have had your chance. You have had your say. Let the minister finish.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will tell the member who I spoke to. I spoke to the officer in charge of the police in Laverton. That is a good source of information on policing in Laverton. I do a lot of that. I do a lot of travelling around the state and talking to officers in charge and officers in police stations throughout our state. I did it on 11 September last year, and I was appraised of the situation, and those sorts of challenges that are being confronted at times now were being confronted then. I asked, “Are you adequately supported with police resources? Are we ensuring that, where needed, we give you additional resources, either from the district, with district superintendent Steve Thompson, or we give you regional operations group assistance?” Because that happens, as well. I wanted to know that the policing support we provided was adequate and met their needs, and I was reassured of that.

The point I want to make is to echo the Premier’s observations on these matters. They are challenging. There is not a simple fix. The challenges are not so simple that someone from the federal opposition can fly in from Canberra and get a photo-op in a town that they have never been to before and suggest that it is all the other side’s fault, five minutes after they lost office, even though the same thing was going on when they were in charge only a couple of years ago. That is not helpful, and it demonstrates a complete lack of sympathy or empathy for all those remote communities in Western Australia. It is concerning that the local Liberal and National Parties chose to embrace Peter Dutton and the federal National Party leader’s exploitation of difficult challenges, which have nothing to do with the federal party,

Speaker; Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Deputy Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Paul Papalia

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other than it would be nice if all sides of federal politics recognised that the Western Australian government has contributed inordinate amounts of money, resources, time and effort towards trying to assist regional communities.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Do you know when the cashless debit card was rolled out? It was 2019. The reasons that you read out are the reasons that the introduction of the cashless debit card took place.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Member, I got a briefing note from the Western Australia Police Force about Laverton, which identified —

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** People are coming in from the lands where the CDC has not been rolled out. I am sorry, member, but the people who are coming in and drinking harmfully come from places in which the CDC was not empowered. There was never a CDC in Carnarvon; the same is true of those places. That is what they told me in the briefing note. I go and see the officers in charge out there. I am flattered that the Leader of the Liberal Party thinks that I have an impact on the statewide morale of the Western Australia Police Force to the extent that I have destroyed it; it is extraordinary that he would make that claim! Many of them may not even know I am there. I say to officers when I am out there—I have a little bit of experience in wearing uniform—that the reality is that morale is a consequence of local leadership more than anything else. I can tell members that the local leaders in Laverton and Carnarvon are excellent, and I have every bit of respect and admiration in the world for them.

*Division*

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

Ayes (5)

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

Noes (45)

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

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Pair

Ms M. Beard

Mr P.C. Tinley

Question thus negatived.