

CRIME — CARNARVON

79. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the contribution to the Premier's Statement by the Minister for Environment on 15 February 2023 whereby the minister argued that our state does not have a crime problem and claimed that the opposition was exaggerating the problem —

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

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Just wait for order, please, member.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

- (1) If the position of the minister's cabinet colleague is correct, why did the Premier, only two days after the no-crime-problem assertions in Parliament, go to Carnarvon to discuss the community's concerns over the level of crime it is experiencing?
- (2) Are people from many other parts of WA expressing genuine concern over the lawlessness and crime waves they are experiencing, or are they all just indulging in extreme, overblown, false language over a non-existent problem?

The SPEAKER: Minister, before I give you the call, I just caution the member that that was a very lengthy question and it actually contained quite a lot of argument. Generally, yes, a little bit of preamble and a little bit of explanation that links to the question is in order, but repetitive argument in the question is not in order.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(2) Thank you, Speaker. I have to admit that I kind of almost nodded off in the middle and may not have captured everything that the member was getting at, but I noticed “Carnarvon” in there, which offers me the opportunity to respond to endorse and back the Premier's observation that he made yesterday and again today quite powerfully. People in communities who are complaining vociferously about levels of crime may want to consider that when the government responds, the response may not be what they want. It may not be what they expected.

I was in Carnarvon a week before the Minister for Racing and Gaming was there. I spoke with some of the same people. We met with the shire president, community members and the police. I guarantee that the police said to me exactly what they said to the Premier. The liquor accord has been dysfunctional. There has not been a liquor accord in Carnarvon.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is the only problem in Carnarvon, is it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: What drives crime in Carnarvon is undeniably the harmful use of alcohol.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Member for Cottesloe, you should get the opportunity for a supplementary but if you incessantly interject, I will consider that you have already had it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Alcohol is behind a lot of the problems. The police brought that to my attention. The Premier referred to the fact that there have been restrictions at the time of funerals. The police made the observation that there is a dramatic drop in crime and presentations at the hospital whenever there is a closure of alcohol because of funerals. That gives the member a lead as to where a response might go.

Police officers in Carnarvon are doing a wonderful job, as they are right around the state. They are doing an incredible job. It is a difficult and challenging environment. They are doing a fantastic job. I wish the member would not undermine their efforts through continually coming in here and suggesting that somehow they are failing.