

POLICE — CRIME STATISTICS

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

According to official statistics from the Western Australia Police Force website, there were 46 025 crimes against the person in Western Australia in 2017 and 53 986 crimes against the person so far in 2022. Can the minister confirm that these statistics are correct; and how can he explain this explosion of crime on his watch?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his question.

I have not yet looked at the statistics; I am getting a briefing this afternoon about that, because they come regularly. I regularly get briefings on statistics. One thing that we do know about statistics is that they are directly related to population. When the population goes up, crime goes up. That is one of the things that occurs. As everyone knows, in the last few years during the COVID pandemic, there was an exceptional increase particularly in crimes related to family and domestic violence and a lot of concern about increased mental health issues, which have also resulted in a significant increase in crimes of the nature that the member is referring to. Specifically, whether that is what has caused it, I cannot confirm that. I can confirm that the police are better resourced, better equipped and more capable of dealing with crime than ever before in the state's history. The equipment improvements that were made throughout the last term of office and that continue in recent times have been extraordinary. The new Commissioner of Police is very focused—as he was in his role as deputy commissioner—on integrating technology, and using technology and adapting new technology, to ensure that we can bring together intelligence with real-time operations. We are getting intelligence to the people on the ground in a far more rapid and efficient manner than ever before, which gives them situational awareness so that as they are approaching a difficult situation, it becomes safer and they are able to more accurately and effectively assess risk. It also assists crime solving. I have referred to it here in recent times. We have only to look at some of the more high-profile incidents that have occurred, even as recently as this week. The police are bringing to account suspects, people who have allegedly conducted offences, at a far more rapid rate than ever before. It is extraordinary. It will only increase and improve in efficiency and speed as we progress in the future, as some of the new initiatives that the commissioner is pursuing come to fruition and as we pass new laws that give police more powers to effectively use those capabilities. They are doing more than ever before in rapidly solving crimes. They are doing it really well. I am really proud of what the police are delivering.