

INQUIRY INTO VIOLENCE AGAINST EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL

Organisation: Government of Western Australia
Name: The Hon. Michael Mischin MLC
Position: Attorney General; Minister for Commerce, WA
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ATTORNEY GENERAL; MINISTER FOR COMMERCE

Our Ref: 44-22262

Mr Geoff Provest MP
The Chair
Committee on Law and Safety
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Provest

SUBMISSIONS ON LAW AND SAFETY COMMITTEE ENQUIRY INTO VIOLENCE AGAINST EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL

Thank you for your letter dated 18 May 2016 inviting submissions with regard to the inquiry into Violence Against Emergency Services Personnel.

In accordance with a Liberal-National election commitment at the 2008 Western Australian State election, amendments to sections 297 and 318 of the *Criminal Code* were made by the *Criminal Code Amendment Act 2009* with the aim of protecting those public officers whose job it is to enforce the law or who enter into dangerous situations with limited protection. The amendments prescribed mandatory sentences for persons (including juveniles aged 16 – 17 years old) convicted of assaulting specific public officers where the officer is performing his or her official duties and the assaults resulted in either bodily harm or grievous bodily harm.

The officers included in this category are:

- police officers,
- prison officers as defined in the *Prisons Act 1981*,
- security officers as defined in the *Public Transport Authority Act 2003*,
- ambulance personnel,
- contract workers providing court security services or custodial services under the *Court Security and Custodial Services Act 1999*, and
- contract workers performing functions under the *Prisons Act 1981*.

The laws were later expanded to include youth custodial officers.

A review of the legislation in 2014 found assaults against Western Australia Police officers had reduced by more than a third over the previous four years. The review indicated that:

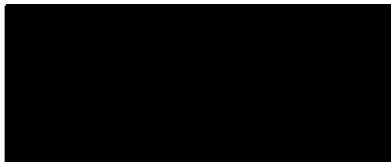
- The number of assaults against police officers had decreased from 1346 to 892 since 2009. There were similar reductions in the number of charges laid for assaults on other public officers;

- There was a 30 per cent reduction in the number of charges for obstructing a public officer.

A further review of the operation and effectiveness of the legislation will be conducted in 2019.

I wish you well with your inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Hon. Michael Mischin MLC
ATTORNEY GENERAL; MINISTER FOR COMMERCE

21 JUN 2016