



House of Representatives Hansard 20 October 2014

Steve IRONS (Swan) (10:57): Crime on Perth's metropolitan train network has been a prevailing issue in my electorate of Swan, with violent and antisocial behaviour on trains, at stations and in surrounding areas such as car parks and the nearby streets making news headlines on a regular basis.

Of all the train lines in Perth, the Armadale-Thornlie line—which runs through Swan and the electorates of my colleagues the member for Canning and the member for Hasluck—is, however, without doubt the worst, accounting for more than one in three assaults on passengers last year according to Western Australian Public Transport Authority statistics.

I will take a moment to highlight that although this level of violence and antisocial behaviour on Perth's train network is confronting this should in no way diminish the significant funding for increased CCTV and lighting at train stations that has been dedicated by both the Western Australian state government and the federal government to improve passenger safety and police officers' ability to find and prosecute criminals. It should also in no way diminish the hard work of the transit officers who patrol PTA property.

Although much work has already been done to combat this issue, I believe an alternative model based on Victoria's Parliamentary Service Officer Program should be trialled in WA to help reduce this level of crime. I recently met with the Victorian Minister for Police and Emergency Services Kim Wells to investigate how a similar PSO program could be trialled in Perth. I have since written to the WA Minister for Transport Dean Nalder to support its implementation under a similar legislative framework to Victoria's.

As part of this investigation I have also been talking to residents on the Armadale-Thornlie line to hear passengers' perceptions of safety on Perth trains firsthand and will be distributing a survey to residents and business owners in Swan who live near one of the train stations on the Armadale-Thornlie line to seek additional feedback in this regard.

Under Victoria's PSO program, officers will patrol every metropolitan station and major regional stations from 6pm until the final train, 365 days a year, once the program is fully implemented.

PSO's also have increased enforcement powers compared to Western Australian transit officers, including the power to arrest people on outstanding warrants, and are also permitted to carry a firearm.

According to the Minister, the program has been successful in increasing the number of passengers utilising train services and their perception of safety. One example the Minister gave was that when

people get off trains at night, they will congregate in an area and one of the PSO's will walk them out to their cars, which has made it a lot safer for passengers to travel on the trains.

There has also been greater detection of crime on the network due to the increased presence of officers and the reporting of previously unreported incidents, with more than 29,000 infringement notices issued from the first deployment of PSOs in February 2012 to 31 March 2014.

I look forward to compiling residents' feedback and discussing the implementation of the PSO trial in WA with Minister Nalder further in the coming weeks.

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