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## Local MLA Backs Role of Police

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said the community outcry over the recent McLeod/Butcher court case had highlighted the need for the new Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2008, which allows for the mandatory sentencing of people who assault public officers.

"I believe we should stand up as a community and defend our police because they uphold the fundamental rule of law in our society. We must ensure that the people we send out to enforce the law are protected from physical abuse," said Dr Nahan.

"If we do not protect them, criminals will abuse the law. I believe that if we don't pass this legislation to provide that protection, we will lose the capacity to have people enforce the law for us."

Dr Nahan said there has been a decline in morals in our society and there is a need to return to the premise where people are responsible for their own actions.

"Statistics show that four police officers in WA are bashed every day. I meet regularly with police and know that they work on the front line of crime in our community. They are adamant that the bottom line is – protect us, so that we can protect you," said Dr Nahan.

Dr Nahan said the bill will cover police officers, including Aboriginal liaison officers and special constables, ambulance officers, prison officers, court security officers, and Public Transport Authority officers. Nurses have not been included because although they are often confronted by drunk or drugged patients, these patients are usually accompanied by police.

"One of the central principles of the bill is to send a clear message to people who might find themselves in a confrontation with the police – do not touch them, do not harm them or you will experience the full weight of the law and you will be put in prison," said Dr Nahan.

"This bill will make that message stronger and although there will always be cases where people might get off, it will help people who enforce our laws in difficult roles and provide them with the protection that they deserve."

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