

## **POLICE, ARREST WARRANTS**

**23 October 2007**

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** Family First recently obtained data through the Freedom of Information Act from the Courts Administration Authority, which indicated that a staggering 30,498 court issued warrants are currently outstanding and active in South Australia, which is potentially one active warrant for every 50th South Australian on average. Family First has been advised by a SAPOL officer that the vast majority of active arrest warrants are not pursued. Most warrants are simply recorded and filed, due to a lack of resources. Police are generally waiting for an offender with a warrant to either hand themselves in or to be discovered by a routine traffic stop, or otherwise for the offender to be arrested on unrelated future charges. My questions are:

1. Is the minister concerned that there are so many potentially dangerous fugitives in the community or outstanding arrest warrants relating to them?
2. What percentage of the total number of outstanding arrest warrants is being actively pursued by SAPOL?
3. Of the percentage of those not being actively pursued, how do the police propose to apprehend those who do not drive and are therefore unlikely to be either pulled over by police on unrelated matters or impacted by a restriction of trade with Transport SA?

**The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police, Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning) (14:41):** I understand there are a number of reasons why arrest warrants may be outstanding. Obviously those warrants remain in force until they are exercised, and in some cases it could be many years. Some warrants may go back many years and the person may have gone overseas, died or whatever. More important is the number of those warrants that can be exercised. It is my

understanding (and I will have to get information as I do not have the statistics with me) that what is important is the number of warrants we have now compared with what we had in the past, and whether this number, taken in absolute terms, is significant or otherwise. That depends on how many of these go back for many years. I will obtain that information for the honourable member and provide him with a response from the police as to their assessment of the significance of the particular number to which he refers.