

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 27th October 2009

ADULT BOOKSHOPS

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (14:58): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Police a question about the policing of adult bookstores.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Recently a constituent rang me in a very distressed state. He had been informed that a local adult store was selling publications which depicted in fantasy stories incest and sexual intercourse with children. I have since been provided with a copy of this material and, from the little I have seen, I can assure the chamber that it is filth, and anyone who desires to read it is very disturbed. Needless to say, once I confirmed that the material did not have classification approval, despite the magazines displaying the R rating symbol, I surrendered the magazines to the appropriate authorities for further investigation.

Perplexed as to how an adult bookstore could so blatantly display and sell this material, I did a bit of research and discovered that the selling of unclassified and, hence, illegal magazines and DVDs is not uncommon but, in fact, the norm. I have learnt from one person in the industry that unclassified material is available at most outlets with the usual practice being a slight mark-up in price in case they are ever raided and prosecuted, although he did state that this was comparatively rare. I was also informed that the fake R18+ symbol that featured on the publications that I received is also common in an attempt to give an impression of legitimacy.

Of course, not all unclassified publications are child pornography or depict incest, but they are illegal under the Classifications, Publications, Films and Computer Act 1955. However, if it is as common as this gentleman stated to me, the only reasonable assumption is that adult bookstores are not being policed and, as such, what is there to prevent them selling offensive material such as child pornography? My questions are:

1. Will the minister inform the chamber of what routine operations are undertaken to police adult bookstores, such as random inspections and undercover operations, and how frequently do they occur?
2. What branch of SAPOL is responsible for such operations and how many personnel are allocated for those operations?
3. How many charges have been laid and successful prosecutions secured in the past five years against adult bookshops for such breaches of the relevant provisions of the classification act or the Criminal Law Consolidation Act?
4. If selling this material is the scourge that has been reported to me, will the minister consider providing additional resources and undertaking additional measures to more closely scrutinise adult bookstores so that this offensive material is taken off the shelves?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (15:01): I thank the honourable member for her question and for bringing this matter to my attention. I am sure that if that sort of activity is taking place and it is drawn to the attention of the police they will respond accordingly. I will refer that question to the Minister for Police in another place and bring back a reply.