

Attorney General – Ministerial Statement
Wednesday, 22 June 2022

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address the Parliament so that I might provide a formal response to Tamica Mullaley and her father, Ted Mullaley, both of whom are in your Speaker's gallery today.

Tamica and Ted have endured the unthinkable. In March 2013, Tamica was the victim of a sustained, vicious attack at the hands of her ex-partner, who left her naked, bleeding, and suffering from life threatening injuries in the streets of Broome.

When police attended the scene, they found an extremely vulnerable young Aboriginal woman. While Tamica was hostile, that was unsurprising given the violence she had just endured. Her father, Ted, arrived at the scene, the situation continued to escalate, resulting in an altercation between Tamica and Ted and the police.

This altercation culminated in Tamica being charged with assaulting and obstructing police officers. Ted was charged with obstructing the police officers. Tamica was not treated by the police at the scene as a victim of domestic violence.

Tamica's ten-month-old baby, Charlie, was at the scene but was given to family friends. After her arrest, Tamica's ex-partner returned to the area and removed Charlie from the family friends. The following day he murdered baby Charlie.

In just two days, Tamica had suffered a life-threatening assault and lost her baby in the most horrific circumstances.

In the months and years that followed, the prosecutions against Tamica and Ted continued, and they were ultimately convicted.

In a 2016 review of the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Corruption and Crime Commission criticised aspects of the police response.

The CCC found that various officers failed to treat Tamica as a victim of an assault. Police failed to establish who assaulted her, with little effort initially made to locate the perpetrator and charge him.

The report is lengthy and I will refer members to it. It is on the CCC's website.

Recently, Tamica and Ted met with myself, the Hon Simone McGurk (Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence), the Hon Paul Papalia (Minister for Police) and the new Police Commissioner Col Blanch.

Tamica explained that nobody from the Government or the Police has ever apologised for what has happened.

I have arranged for Tamica and Ted to be in Parliament today, so that I can say what should have been said a long time ago. On behalf of the Government of Western Australia, Tamica and Ted, I am sorry for how you have been treated by the Government and the WA Police both before and after losing baby Charlie.

We have taken seriously the concerns you raised about those criminal charges continuing against you.

In response to those concerns, I inform the House that the Governor of Western Australia has exercised the Royal Prerogative of Mercy so as to grant free, absolute, and unconditional pardons to Tamica and Ted for those offences.

The granting of such pardons is a truly exceptional step. It is so exceptional that I could not find a case in modern Western Australian history where pardons of this nature have been granted.

Ted and Tamica deserved compassion. Instead, the system we thought we could rely on to support victims of crime, failed Tamica and Ted and they were dragged through the courts themselves. These pardons are a show of mercy, which for Tamica and Ted has been a long time coming.

While extensive work has been undertaken to prevent a tragedy like this occurring again, as a government, and as a State, we must acknowledge that for Tamica and Ted, the response at the time was clearly deficient.

Tamica and Ted, for that I am truly sorry. You deserve much better from the Police and the Government. We are sorry.

The Minister for Police – Ministerial Statement

Madam Speaker, I join the Attorney General in acknowledging the heartbreaking circumstances surrounding the tragic death of baby Charlie, and how it has impacted the lives of the Mullaley family.

I attended the meeting with Tamica, Ted and the Mullaley family, and both myself and the deputy police commissioner Col Blanch observed that while there is always more work to be done, there has been significant progress in how the WA Police force respond to family violence and how officers work with Aboriginal people since 2013.

The WA Police force have established the family and domestic violence division. Providing oversight from frontline practices and procedures, with a mandate for continual improvement in the way police respond to family violence.

In addition to this, all WA police are now receiving training to improve their understanding of the complexities and risks in family violence. The WA Police force remains dedicated to contributing to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people across the State.

Following the Police Commissioners historic apology to Western Australia's Aboriginal people in July 2019, there have been several changes implemented to bring a stronger cultural awareness and competence within the agency. These changes include, the creation of the Aboriginal Police Advisory Forum, which is comprised of twelve Aboriginal leaders from across the State.

In addition, cultural awareness training is delivered to all staff across the agency. This training is unique, as it is contextualised to policing in specific geographical locations and relates to the local Aboriginal culture.

The WA police force have also undertaken a number of operational changes since 2013, including continued commitment to growing the representation of Aboriginal people in the force. As of February 2022, there were 183 Aboriginal police officers across the agency, nearly a 48% increase since Feb 2013, largely in recent years. In fact, another two officers will graduate from the academy tomorrow evening.

To Tamica and Ted, who are here in the chamber today. I want to express my deepest sympathy for the terrible suffering you have endured. I would also like to say to you both that baby Charlie's legacy will be a commitment from this Government, to do everything in its power to prevent senseless tragic death in our community.

Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence – Ministerial Statement

Madam Speaker, I rise alongside the Attorney General and Minister for Police today, in acknowledging the Mullaley Family, and I thank Tamica and Ted for participating and travelling here to be with us today.

This tragic incident involving the Mullaley family is one that has stayed with me and always will. It reminds us to do better, and that we all have a role to play in understanding, responding to and preventing Family and Domestic Violence.

The events that unfolded over the course of the evening and the following day, demonstrate how an inadequate understanding of family and domestic violence can have utterly devastating consequences.

Since commencing as the first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence in 2017, the McGowen Government has made significant changes to Western Australia's family and domestic violence practices, policies and legislation.

I have been working closely with my cabinet colleagues to ensure that we are taking a whole of government approach, to better understand and respond to family violence. This includes improving our family and domestic violence response teams. These are multi agency teams who work together to provide an early, coordinated response to incidents of family and domestic violence.

Officers from the Department of Justice will now also join these teams to ensure that the risk around perpetrators is understood and managed better.

Sadly, there are high rates of family violence within Aboriginal communities and we acknowledge that we have to do things differently.

This is why we are delivering an Aboriginal Family Safety strategy, to ensure all Aboriginal people in Western Australia live safe and healthy lives, free from family violence, and that we are all part of that solution.

Tamica and Ted, I'd like to pay my respects to you and acknowledge the ongoing strength and courage of victim survivors like yourselves. I'd also like to pay tribute to Baby Charlie, who's tragic loss shall never be forgotten. While we cannot change the past, I sincerely hope that today's events can support you and your family's healing journey.