



UPGRADE LATE

Police promise, training lashed

■ **Beatrice Thomas**

The State Opposition has accused the Government of a broken promise to carry out an \$11.7 million upgrade and base 80 officers at Morley police station by the end of this month.

It also launched a broader attack in Parliament on the Government's record in the police portfolio, with Labor claiming a change in how cadets are hired would have children handling drugs and firearms.

In a newsletter Morley Liberal MLA Ian Britza distributed in May last year, he said Morley police station would be upgraded with 80 officers based at the "upgraded Coode St facility".

"The \$11.7 million project is part of the biggest ever \$1.2 billion WA Police budget in 2012-13," the newsletter said.

However, in a newsletter in 2011, Mr Britza said the \$11.7 million was to upgrade Mirrabooka, Scarborough and Morley stations and was to be completed last month.

At the station yesterday, Opposition Leader Mark McGowan said Morley had about 30 staff and no site works had started.

In Parliament, it emerged that future police cadets would be employed under the Police Act instead of the Public Sector Management Act.

WA Police told the public sector union this month future cadets would have "some police powers such as those similar to PAO (police auxiliary officers) in property management".

Mr McGowan told Parliament property management duties for PAOs included handling and transporting drugs and firearms

and, under supervision, processing the contents of drug labs.

He said the Government would use teenagers to aid its recruitment target.

"Police cadets aged 16 to 18 are going to be processing the contents of clandestine drug laboratories," he said.

But Police Minister Liza Harvey said though cadet roles were being determined, she guaranteed none would be involved in dismantling drug laboratories.

She said cadets with PAO roles would have strict supervision.

Mrs Harvey said cadet numbers were above the Government's pledge for 1050 more officers by 2017 and the change was to boost cadet numbers.

Mrs Harvey said the Morley upgrade and the pledge for 80 police officers based there would be "delivered" next year.