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Triple 0 Records - Proof of an Epidemic of Violence

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Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — As long as I have been in this Parliament I have had to put up with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services making claims that the Victorian crime rate was declining, that Victoria was the safest state in Australia, that record amounts of money were being spent on policing, and that we had more police on the streets than ever before. Yet at the same time, we knew that people were becoming less and less comfortable about walking our streets, not only in the dark but often even in broad daylight.

It has become increasingly hard to reconcile the utopian claims of a spin-driven government with the reality of an ever-increasing level of vicious and seemingly random and aimless assaults. There has been a daily parade of stories, each one worse than the last.

In one of the most recent, a young Mornington Peninsula footballer, not long turned 18, was attacked in Main Street, Mornington. He and a cousin were waiting for a taxi when they were bashed by a group of men. He sustained a dislocated shoulder, a fractured nose and a fractured bone near his eye. The cousin, fortunately, suffered only minor injuries.

It has long been clear that government claims and the reality on our streets are two entirely different things. So I was not at all surprised to see that assaults recorded by 000 on the Mornington Peninsula were 59 per cent higher than the official police statistics. Frequently I have said I have an extremely high opinion of the way our local police go about their business, but that there are simply nowhere near enough of them to keep the community safe.

The release of these previously confidential figures has now proved that I was right all along, and that our local police really are incredibly stretched. Until the Brumby government matches its rhetoric to resources, Victorians cannot be confident when they leave home that they can expect to return unharmed.