



COURTS, SOFT SENTENCING
29 August 2002

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Can the Attorney-General advise what action was taken regarding the convicted abalone poacher who had \$36 000 in fines written off—which matter he undertook to have followed up by 11 July—and whether, in such cases, the court costs and victims of crime levy are recovered? I have another similar case of soft-sentencing where a criminal, this time with 49 offences from all over the state, including false pretences and stolen cheques, has had \$16 000 in fines written off. A constituent has reported that the criminal is back in town, 10 foot tall and invincible. This is a terrible example for local youth. My constituent is particularly annoyed if these offenders are also having court costs and victims of crime levies waived.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I think it is a fair question that the member asks, and I read her letter about the convicted abalone poacher carefully. We had some difficulty tracking down exactly who this person was because I do not think the member for Flinders was able to supply us with a name, as I recall, and I will consult with her about whether we have the right person. I think in some cases it is a matter of being unable to get blood out of a stone, but I think the public has a right to be angry when the penalties for a long list of offences is written off some years after the offences were committed.

COURTS, SOFT SENTENCING
9 July 2002

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): My question is directed to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General give an assurance that all people who are convicted in South Australian courts for poaching abalone are appropriately punished? I understand that the new penalty management system is allowing offenders to write off significant amounts of fines. I am advised of a case on the West Coast where a convicted abalone poacher had \$36 000 of fines converted to community service under the penalty management system. He apparently then obtained a sickness certificate for a bad back, the case went back to court, and the community service was written off.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): If the member for Flinders will give me the details of the case, I will be happy to make inquiries and get a report for her and for the house