

FAMILY VIOLENCE COURT PILOT, JOONDALUP

846. Mrs EDWARDES to the Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth:

I refer the minister to Labor's pre-election commitment to combat domestic violence in the northern suburbs when it said -

Labor supports the Family Violence Court Pilot in Joondalup and will ensure that the project is adequately resourced . . .

- (1) Is the minister aware that this Government has again extended funding for only three months from the end of March to the end of June, creating further uncertainty over the long-term future of the project?
- (2) Given the success of this project in helping more than 700 victims over the past two years, has the minister made strong representations to the Attorney General to urge him to make a decision regarding the long-term future of the project, ending the uncertainty under which it currently operates?

Ms McHALE replied:

I thank the member for her question.

- (1)-(2) She is entirely right: this Government has made enormous gains in the area of domestic family violence and will continue to make progress and to fund our election commitments as we move through this year and the next several years. We have funded a range of new services for women facing what I think is a scourge in this community; that is, violence against women and children. It is not something that we should tolerate in any way. The record of this Government in meeting its commitments on domestic violence is entirely sustainable and one of which I am very proud.

I am happy to answer the specific question. I in part indicated where we are coming from on the question of domestic violence. The family violence court at Joondalup is recognised as being successful. The Attorney General has kept me informed of the work that the court is doing. At the women's convention I met women who are involved in the family violence court and spoke very highly of the work that was being done. They also spoke very highly of the Attorney General for continuing to support that court. I have on numerous occasions spoken to the Attorney General about the importance of ensuring that successful services continue. The member can be assured that he and I have spoken on a number of occasions about the importance of doing everything that a good Government can do to ensure that we reduce the incidence of domestic violence in our community. That requires support from my department and the court system. The member has my assurances that this Government will be judged in a very positive light on the work it is doing on domestic violence.