

ADVOCARE — ELDER ABUSE HELPLINE

520. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering:

I recently attended a parliamentary briefing from Advocare Incorporated about elder abuse. Can the minister advise the house what the government is doing to support vulnerable elderly Western Australians?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

I thank the member for Swan Hills for his question and for his interest in elder abuse. It is something that is very important in our community and this government supports seniors very much. As members are very much aware, somewhere in Western Australia 12 000 seniors face abuse. Quite clearly, this is not a good outcome for us. One thing I really have to stress more than anything about elder abuse is that it is more likely to come from a relationship of trust; that is from extended family members and extended relationships. It is very important that the government recognises this. It has been very supportive of an elder abuse hotline set up by Advocare. The member for Swan Hills attended a briefing about it last Thursday. Last year, I stood to speak about \$80 000 to set up a hotline to help out elder abuse. It can be to do with anything, including emotional abuse and financial abuse. Seniors can seek advice through that hotline for any type of abuse. That is the important part. This year's budget allocated another \$100 000 towards that hotline.

Last week was Elder Abuse Awareness Day. We did a thing down in Forrest Chase with Advocare. We did the article in *The Sunday Times* about that. On the Monday morning there were nine calls into that hotline. One thing is clear: we understand that as a government we have to do more advertising and promotion for this thing. It is clearly why we are trying to help out and make sure this advertising is right. We have also been working very closely with Edith Cowan University. It came up with an innovative way to check on seniors in terms of how secure their money is. The application is a fantastic little device that is set up. By checking through about eight questions, seniors can find out how safe their money is and who can access it. It is very important that seniors feel safe not only in our community, but also at home, and that they trust the people who care and look after them. This government supports seniors in our community by helping them achieve their independence in their elderly years.