

METHAMPHETAMINE — SOUTH WEST REGION

330. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the appalling and shocking rate of methamphetamine use in Bunbury and the south west and the McGowan Labor government's commitment to tackling this scourge.

Can the minister outline to the house how the McGowan Labor government's investment in alcohol and drug rehabilitation services will help those grappling with addiction?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. One of the issues that unites all members of Parliament today is our absolute disgust and fear about the amount of methamphetamine in our community, particularly our regional communities, and the impact that has on our communities. As members will be all too aware, meth has taken hold of many communities and towns across the state. It has a corrosive impact upon families and people's lives. It has impacts on crime—particularly violent crime and burglaries. This is an issue that we have to get on top of. One of our 2017 election commitments was that the state government would implement a statewide integrated methamphetamine action plan, which is being overseen by the methamphetamine action plan task force, to reduce demand and supply, and to address the harm associated with methamphetamine use. As part of that election commitment, the state government has committed to expand drug and alcohol services in regional and rural areas of need and will increase access to alcohol and other drug services and residential rehab beds in the south west.

Ms L. Mettam: How about the standalone —

The SPEAKER: How about not asking questions when you are not on your feet?

Mr R.H. COOK: Identifying the growing needs of the south west, the McGowan Labor government has fast-tracked our election commitment to deliver specialised alcohol and drug rehab services in the area. Part of our election commitment was to build a standalone rehab facility in the south west. Upon coming to government we were advised that the best and fastest way to do this is to engage not-for-profits and other organisations that already have capacity in the area.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr R.H. COOK: I am very pleased to announce the opening in early 2019 of an additional 33 alcohol and other drug rehab beds in addition to the 1 400 new alcohol and other drug treatment services provided to the people of the south west each year.

This decision is important because it means that our original election commitment can be implemented two years earlier than anticipated. It is an innovative and smart way to deliver on this very important election commitment. We are getting on with the job of addressing the issues of methamphetamine in our community. We have policies across various portfolios—in the Minister for Corrective Services' area we have policies around alcohol and other drug clinics inside our prisons. We have innovative new ways to get on top of this, the most difficult and insidious of drug issues impacting on our community.