

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, NINE YEAR OLD INVOLVED IN BURGLARIES

3055. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth

I refer the Minister to *The West Australian* dated 21 July 2004, and the article titled, 'Tearaway, 9, to get close care' and ask -

- (a) why did it take extensive media coverage of the situation for the Department to take action;
- (b) was the Department informed on each occasion that the child was taken into the custody or interviewed by police in relation to the 60 burglaries he admitted to;
- (c) if not, what action will the Minister take to ensure that there are no further communication breakdowns;
- (d) if yes to (b), what action did the department take on each occasion;
- (e) what support services were in place for the grandmother to look after the boy;
- (f) did the department know which school the boy was enrolled to attend;
- (g) did the department approach the school offering support services or asking to be kept informed if the boy was away from school;
- (h) if not, why not; and
- (i) given that action to protect the child from harm was not taken until the media became involved, will the Minister ensure that there are no other children, that the department knows about, in a similar situation?

Ms S.M. McHALE replied:

- (a) It did not require media coverage for the Department to take action.
- (b) The Department became aware of "the 60 burglaries" approximately 10 days before the media were advised. As far as the Department was aware, the boy was taken to the Police Station on one occasion. Departmental Officers were in attendance. The Department has not been made aware of any other interviews in relation to the burglaries.
- (c) Clear lines of communication have been established between Cannington Police Station and departmental staff at the Cannington District Office.
- (d) Departmental officers attended the Police station. Alternative placements were considered with the boy and his family. The boy was placed with members of his family.
- (e) Supports and services included:
 - regular home visit by the case manager to provide supports as and when needed and to discuss arrangements for school and medical appointments
 - respite care
 - Youth and Family Engagement Officer involvement with the whole family
 - transport provided for referrals to health services for the boy
 - financial supports
- (f) Yes.
- (g) Yes.
- (h) Not applicable.
- (i) Not applicable.