

YIRIMAN PROJECT — DIVERSIONARY PROGRAM

278. Hon SHELLEY ARCHER to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre Yiriman Project, which has received accolades from Murdoch University as demonstrating national best practice in a cultural intergenerational program and which was a finalist in the 2007 National Drug and Alcohol Awards in the category for excellence in services for young people.

- (1) Given the recent findings of the inquest into 22 Aboriginal deaths in the Kimberley, will the minister explain why, after countless presentations from the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre, the Department of Corrective Services has not funded the Yiriman Youth Project as a diversionary program for the Kimberley?
- (2) In line with recommendation 50 of the customary law report that the Western Australian government establish diversionary schemes for young Aboriginal people, what are the minister's plans for a youth diversionary program in the Kimberley?

Hon JON FORD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Minister for Corrective Services has supplied the following answer —

- (1) The Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre has sought financial assistance from the Department of Corrective Services to establish a youth diversionary scheme and employ an Indigenous justice officer for the Kimberley. KALACC has been advised that further information on how the youth diversionary program proposals would be implemented is required. In particular, details have been requested on the proposed activities' integration with other programs and agencies, as well as how it is proposed to meet the need for ongoing care to be provided to participants on return to their normal environment. To date, this information has not been provided.

The Department of Corrective Services has had involvement with the Yiriman project in the past through the placement of juveniles at the program's camps, which are short-term in nature and, in effect, are not diversionary. However, they provide an element of respite for both communities and the juveniles. The department has funded Aboriginal juveniles' attendance, in addition to providing staff support for the duration of the camp.

- (2) The department has created two community adviser Aboriginal services positions to liaise with the communities on sentencing options, diversionary programs for youth, and supervision of juveniles as part of the Kimberley response task force. In addition, it is the department's longer term intention to expand the regional youth justices services established in Geraldton to the eastern goldfields.