

CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — KIMBERLEY

Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.50 pm]: Earlier this month I visited the Kimberley, meeting with locals in Kununurra, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Broome about the crime impacting their communities. I joined the member for North West Central and member for Mining and Pastoral Region Hon Neil Thomson for a series of meetings and forums. We heard firsthand the devastating impact of crime and antisocial behaviour in these communities. This crime wave is not new; the opposition has previously raised concerns in this house, only to have them ignored by the Minister for Police and the McGowan government. It was devastating to hear people say they felt their towns had become lawless, equal parts worried for their own safety and the future of their community.

After months of reports of youth crime on the rise in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne, the Minister for Police has finally heeded the cry for help and additional police resources have been sent to provide respite for these communities. Now they must work to address the root cause of the challenges, and if locals are supported by government, they can make a real difference. In the forums we attended locals put forward ideas that have great merit. I congratulate the Kimberley regional councils and groups like Olabud Doogethu in Halls Creek for their initiative. Empowering local communities to address housing, education, health and employment can create the change needed, but it should not have taken a crisis to get the attention they deserve.