

COMMUNITIES — INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES REPORT

124. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Child Protection:

I have a supplementary question. Is the minister rejecting the finding in the report that there is widescale and endemic racism or does she consider herself more qualified to make this assessment than the author of the report, who is an Aboriginal woman who holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and is a world leader in Aboriginal mental health and cultural competency?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I do not know whether the member has read the report. Has she read the 450 pages of the report and fully understood the different issues that it was looking at? Has she read it? Has she had a look at it?

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am pretty sure she has not read the report and she has not read the PricewaterhouseCoopers report either.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I am asking you to be quiet. I would like to hear the minister's response. This is a supplementary answer. I would like it to be brief, please.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I think it is important to understand that the Department of Communities does very important work, particularly the child protection workforce in the department, which is incredibly dedicated to getting good outcomes for the families, particularly the children, that they work with. I think we all need to understand how we can improve our understanding of Aboriginal culture and therefore better engage with Aboriginal families and communities. We need to understand how to better work with Aboriginal-controlled organisations. I particularly want to acknowledge the work of child protection workers in our state and the community—that is both the Department of Communities and those who work with our partner agencies. They are doing very difficult work. The majority of them are not Aboriginal, and we acknowledge that, but they are absolutely committed to working to get good outcomes to deepen their own cultural understanding and also to —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse and the other ministers, you are not invited to interject. Minister, can you just finalise that answer, please.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I acknowledge the important work of the child protection workforce in Western Australia. I also acknowledge the role the Department of Communities plays and the work it is doing to deepen its understanding of engagement with Aboriginal people and their culture and their communities to achieve better outcomes.