

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — EARLY INTERVENTION

775. Ms L.L. BAKER to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to keeping Western Australians safe from family and domestic violence. Can the minister outline how the government is working in partnership with the commonwealth to strengthen early intervention measures, and also advise on how this response will ensure that perpetrators are held to account?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I thank the member for Maylands for her question. Of course, within her own electorate, there is a very important residential program for perpetrators called Breathing Space, and I know that she has long advocated for those facilities.

Violence against partners and families is never acceptable, and perpetrators must and should be held to account. There is no excuse for violence. Importantly, by holding perpetrators to account, we have a better likelihood of stopping the cycle of violence, because in many instances, we know that it is a cycle of violence. I am happy to inform the house that earlier this month, with my commonwealth colleagues, I announced a \$3.125 million innovative perpetrator response initiative to trial direct targeted engagement with men after police call-outs to family and domestic violence incidents. This trial will aim to hold perpetrators accountable, prevent them from reoffending and improve victim-survivor safety. In effect, it will, in a direct way, challenge perpetrators to change their behaviour. The trial will see specialist workers who work with male perpetrators join five of the 17 family and domestic violence response teams that we have in this state; the five locations are Northam, Bunbury, Midland, Joondalup and Fremantle.

The family and domestic violence response teams are a really great example of providing support for not only victim-survivors of family and domestic violence, but also perpetrators. I was recently at Cockburn Police Station with the member for Cockburn, where we had the opportunity to see one of these family and domestic violence response teams in action. It is a way in which we physically bring together child protection workers, police and not-for-profit organisations that provide supports, so that proper triaging of police offences occurs on a daily basis, and then those support services swing into action behind victim-survivors and also to support perpetrators. This investment will see that important work of those family and domestic violence response teams grow even stronger and make sure that they directly engage with perpetrators, hold them to account and challenge them to change their behaviour.

The expressions of interest to deliver this initiative opened earlier this month to organisations that are already delivering perpetrator programs with a service or branch agreement with the department and will close on 5 November. The trial will run for three years. As I said before, to stop the cycle, this initiative aims to hold perpetrators accountable and to challenge them to take responsibility for their actions and seek the help they need. We have to break the cycle of family and domestic violence, and one of the key ways we will break that cycle is by challenging perpetrators—always holding them to account for their behaviour, but challenging them to do better.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Liberal Party with the last question.