

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — AMBULANCE FEES

290. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the financial burden on victims of domestic violence who require an ambulance and who have to find \$1 000 to pay for this service at a time of crisis. Has the minister lobbied the Premier; Treasurer to guarantee the budget will alleviate this cost impost on victims and forgive the debt for anyone who finds themselves in this situation?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I welcome the question from the opposition because they have been few and far between when it comes to a focus on domestic violence. Two-thirds of assaults that are worked through by police are domestic violence related. We know we have high rates of domestic violence in Western Australia and that is why we brought a singular focus of attention to this issue, with additional resources and cooperation across government agencies and the community sector to deliver services, as well as, frankly, the corporate and philanthropic sector. We have worked very hard across a range of different areas.

I was very pleased in the lead-up to the state budget, which we will hear the detail of shortly, to announce \$34.4 million of new money in today's budget. It is a significant increase of funding. For instance, the seat of Armadale will have our third hub, with \$14.7 million allocated to the new hub there. That will be our third hub, along with Kalgoorlie and Mirrabooka. These are alternative places so that people come forward. We are doing a whole lot of work across domestic violence in terms of combating the high levels of violence to make sure that victims are safe. We have two new refuges, the three hubs that I just talked about, and we will also open another hub in the Kimberley. I am holding perpetrators to account. Part of our budget announcement was to continue some perpetrator programs in the Kimberley. This is very difficult work. There is not a lot of an evidence base for what is effective when working with perpetrators, but we are working with Stopping Family Violence, our peak body in Western Australia, on that front. We are making sure our courts and our justice system are up to the task. We have undertaken very considerable law reform in cooperation with the Attorney General. We are also looking at how we tackle the complex issues of coercive control and what is the best way to tackle this very pervasive but perhaps a very important early warning system for domestic violence. Obviously, we have been doing work with Respectful Relationships in the 16 Days campaign.

What happened for eight and a half years under the government of the Leader of the Opposition to combat domestic violence? What exactly happened for eight and a half years to combat domestic violence under her government's watch? Not a lot! In the final week of the Parliament before the state election in 2017, we finalised the family violence restraining order scheme. That was a commitment that the previous coalition government had entered into as part of a national agreement. That was on the final day of Parliament. We established two refuges; one was under Wungening's management and there was another one, which is not a 24-hour refuge. Apart from those, I cannot think of many things that the previous government did. You left us a lot to do! Other states were getting on with it and working on a range of different matters. We have been working on this. We committed in 2017 to \$21 million of new spending. To date, with the current budget, we will have committed \$150 million of new spending. I know there is a lot of work to do, Leader of the Opposition—you do not need to tell me! I work with services every day. I work with people with lived experience every day. I work with government agencies that are doing this work every day. There is a lot to do, but we are getting on with doing it.