

BEST BEGINNINGS PROGRAM

454. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the minister representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to last week's budget announcement that funding will be cut for the Department for Child Protection and Family Support's Best Beginnings program.

- (1) How many families participated in the program in 2014–15 and 2015–16 in the following towns —
 - (a) Albany;
 - (b) Broome;
 - (c) Bunbury;
 - (d) Busselton;
 - (e) Collie;
 - (f) Fitzroy Crossing;
 - (g) Kununurra; and
 - (h) Mandurah?
- (2) How much funding was provided for the Best Beginnings program in each of these towns in 2014–15 and 2015–16?
- (3) Why is funding for this program being cut?
- (4) What new services will replace the Best Beginnings program across WA?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

- (1) The Best Beginnings program is run by district; therefore, the results provided are for the districts that include the towns listed in the question. The number of families participating in the Best Beginnings program by district and financial year is as follows: great southern, 21 in 2014–15 and 20 in 2015–16; West Kimberley, 26 in 2014–15 and 15 in 2015–16; south west, 46 in 2014–15 and 59 in 2015–16; East Kimberley, 11 in 2014–15 and two in 2015–16; Peel, 54 in 2014–15 and 38 in 2015–16.

Please note that the numbers for 2015–16 include the cases open during the period 1 July 2015 to 30 April 2016.
- (2) The funding for the Best Beginnings program has been provided at a departmental district level and not on a town basis. The funding for 2014–15 and 2015–16 is outlined in the table below, and I seek leave to have that incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

Country Services	2014-15	2015-16
East Kimberley	101,629	95,812
Goldfields	138,372	121,945
Great Southern	94,590	96,174
Murchison	200,113	224,515
Peel	81,013	85,134
Pilbara	108,698	112,052
South West	249,709	293,865
West Kimberley	84,587	58,345
Wheatbelt	242,561	245,596
Total	1,301,272	1,333,438

- (3)–(4) The department will continue to provide the Best Beginnings program in the 17 service delivery districts across Western Australia.

The funding provided by royalties for regions for a proportion of this service was on a fixed-term basis and will not be continuing past the 2017–18 financial year. Other funding for this service will continue and be redirected into an earlier intervention and family support strategy.

The earlier intervention and family support strategy aims to coordinate how the department, along with other government and community sector agencies, works with families whose children are most vulnerable to poor life outcomes, including being removed from their parents' care and/or entering the youth justice system. This strategy will work to deliver more flexible, tailored and intensive options that will specifically meet individual families' needs.