

METHAMPHETAMINE ACTION PLAN TASKFORCE

220. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the methamphetamine crisis that has gripped my community and has led to Bunbury being given the distressing and unenviable title of the meth capital of Australia. How will this government's meth task force tackle this scourge and protect and support communities like mine?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question and commend him for making this a key priority during his time as the member for Bunbury. As we all know, we have a methamphetamine crisis in our community. It is a corrosive, destructive substance that is destroying townships and communities across our state. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all members of Parliament when I say that we must do more to continue to drive down the incidence of use and abuse and make sure that we get on top of this scourge in our community.

The state government has implemented a statewide coordinated and targeted meth action plan, which includes \$45 million over four years of new and existing funding. That funding will go towards additional drug treatment facilities to respond to early intervention and severe methamphetamine dependence, the opening of residential rehabilitation centres in the south west and the Kimberley, the introduction of a mental health observation area at the Royal Perth Hospital emergency department and dedicated drug rehabilitation programs in our prisons. Our methamphetamine action plan is about interrupting supply, reducing demand and preventing and alleviating harm. We have to take a cross-government approach to it to make sure that all departments are working together in a coordinated fashion so that we are most effective in this campaign.

Yesterday I was very pleased to announce that we are implementing a high-level Methamphetamine Action Plan Taskforce. It will be headed by Mr Ron Alexander, a man who has a great deal of respect in the community and a track record of working across government departments to get good outcomes. He will be joined on that task force by Professor Daniel Fatovich; Hon Don Punch, MLA, the member for Bunbury; Professor Colleen Hayward; Professor Simon Lenton of the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University; and, of course, Assistant Commissioner Michelle Fyfe. The task force will take a leadership role in guiding government departments to work together to make sure that the community is working against the crisis that is the methamphetamine scourge on our community. I think all members of Parliament would agree that this task is important and one that this Parliament and the government must work on together to make sure we get on top of this most devastating and evil of illicit drugs in our community.