

STATE BUDGET 2022–23 — FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Matter of Public Interest

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.50 pm]: I today received within the prescribed time a letter from the member for Vasse in the following terms —

I give notice that I will move as a Matter of Public Interest:

That this House joins West Australians in condemning the lack of vision and leadership from this State Budget resulting in underfunding of family and domestic violence support services at a time of record windfalls and when families are under significant housing and cost of living pressures.

The matter appears to me to be in order and if there are at least five members who will stand in support of the matter being discussed, the matter can proceed.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: Members, I might just also highlight that last week when we had two Labor members stand, they were standing in support of the matter being discussed; they were not standing in support of the motion. So when I say that, I am saying that members support the matter being discussed. It is a regular thing to support the opposition having an MPI each week. That is sometimes what members are required to do, given COVID and other circumstances.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [2.54 pm]: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move —

That this house joins Western Australians in condemning the lack of vision and leadership from this state budget resulting in underfunding of family and domestic violence support services at a time of record windfalls and when families are under significant housing and cost-of-living pressures.

I am the opposition's lead speaker for this debate. This is on the back of a budget that proves we are the wealthiest state in the nation, with the government enjoying a \$5.7 billion surplus. This is a budget that, according to our ever so modest Treasurer, would make Treasurers across the country look like they have swallowed a bumblebee, apparently. While the Treasurer is busy congratulating himself on accumulating such wealth, the real sting in this budget is for some of our most vulnerable families across the state. The number of family and domestic violence cases, as reported in the budget papers, is expected to increase by 17 per cent between 2020–21 and 2022–23, from 15 127 in 2020–21 to 17 750 cases. However, this needs further explanation for context. The actual number of cases in 2020–21 was 15 127. Last year, the government did not expect that we would see so much of a change, but the number of cases certainly went beyond expectations. It must have been a shock to discover that actual case numbers have gone up to 17 788. At the same time as the predicted number of family and domestic violence cases will go up by 17 per cent from 2020 to 2023, this government decided to slash the budget for preventing and responding to family and domestic violence by the same amount in the coming years—at 17 per cent of the total cost of services.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: It is your budget, minister! The cut is to be from \$89 million to about \$73 million.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Okay. Shall we try this again?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Ms L. METTAM: I heard the Dorothy Dixier to the Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence yesterday. We have heard that the government's explanation is that the commonwealth's COVID-19 funding has ceased, but the truth is that demand has not ceased —

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Ms L. METTAM: — and the reality is —

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Point of Order

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Mr R.S. LOVE: I cannot understand what is going on, and I ask you to bring them to order.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just wait everyone—member for Vasse. Points of order will be heard in silence, please. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, can you repeat your point of order?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I ask you to consider whether or not the interjections of the minister upon the member for Vasse are disorderly conduct.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time.

Thank you, deputy leader, there is no point of order there; I do not uphold a point of order. Minister, you will get a chance to respond, so please carry on, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The reality is that just because the commonwealth funding for time-limited initiatives has ceased, that does not mean that the demand has ceased. The demand, in fact, is growing exponentially, to the point of service agencies stating that it is the worst situation that they have ever seen. While this government sits on this \$5.7 billion surplus in a state that is in an enviable financial position, it is extraordinary that this government has failed to ensure that there would not be such a significant shortfall. While the Premier claims he is helping those in need most with a \$400 electricity rebate, I remind him that an electricity rebate is of little value when people do not have a home. It is of little value when their home is a refuge or they are living with their kids in their car. While the budget reports a 17 per cent increase in cases, according to the WA police 2021 annual report, FDV reports are about 19 per cent above the five-year average. In regional WA, people are three times more likely to be exposed to family and domestic violence incidents—statistics that I am sure the Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence is well aware of. We also hear from the sector that it is under extraordinary pressure.

I refer to some comments made by the WA Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing's director of family, domestic and sexual violence, Dr Alison Evans, who told the ABC —

“The sector suffers from chronic underfunding and is always trying to catch up whenever there's increased funding ...

“Additional funding for new initiatives like the hubs doesn't ameliorate that historic and ongoing underfunding of this sector” ...

“We all often look at Victoria with a great deal of envy because we know that it can make a difference if the sector is better resourced.”

Dr Evans said she would have liked to see the government invest some of its multi-billion-dollar surplus to help services address the unmet needs around longer-term recovery for victims.

“We need to better support the family domestic violence workforce to enable them to deliver the most effective and safe services for women and their children ...

“It's very difficult when they have to be spending a lot of time trying to get additional grants and things to ensure they can be as responsive as possible.”

In response to my question today about the fundraising undertaken by many refuges, the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence suggested that it was for the extra things. Minister, it is not for the extra things. A south west refuge has had to turn away 300 families over the past 12 months and is already talking about having to turn away 150 families this year alone. It describes this experience as horrible. The current shortage in affordable and available housing has also exacerbated this matter. It is clear that the McGowan government's failings in this area are contributing to this problem. Because of this, many women and children escaping family and domestic violence are forced to choose between staying in an unsafe family home and facing homelessness. The shortfall in funding is hurting the most vulnerable at a time when our Treasurer is gloating about the wealth of this state and comparing his surplus to that of other Treasurers.

There is concern across the board about the recently offered five-year contracts. Those contracts were for funding that was effectively at levels that have not changed since before Labor's first budget in 2017. We have been told that because of the significant demand for services and the significant increase in utility costs, many refuges are considering cutting

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services. As I said, one south west refuge has been running off the same contract for the past seven years. How shocking is it that at a time when our most vulnerable are waiting longer for assistance, they are effectively being turned away because refuges and services do not have capacity. Under this government, these services, like many others, are having to do more with less. The government has posted an \$11 billion surplus over the past two years, but it still cannot afford to tip in any extra to these services to meet the existing demand, let alone the future demand. We hear that it is absolutely not its fault—that we should look to the federal government. Of course, this issue is not limited to the south west; we see this across the board with other services and we are getting feedback across the state.

Counselling services are also under extraordinary pressure. Waratah Support Centre has reflected the state of the sector in the south west region. It says that it is effectively cutting services just to keep up. It has not seen an effective increase in funding since 2014. Its waitlist for adults and children is about three months. It told us that it should be covering areas such as Manjimup and Narrogin, but it does not have the capacity, given the waitlists it currently has. Clients often do not have the technology and phone counselling is not always suitable for the very sensitive matters that these services deal with. Narrogin's Rainbow Women's Centre says that the demand for services had increased in 2021 by 27 per cent on the previous year. It welcomes the additional funding during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020, but said that prior to that, the amount of funding had remained stagnant, despite the increased demand for services. I quote Tara Lanciano —

The current rental crisis has resulted in families remaining in safe accommodation for longer periods due to difficulties accessing public and private rentals.

There has been an increased demand of accommodation requests from the metro area, as other refuges are at capacity and not able to bring in new women and children in crisis.

She states that the funding has largely been stagnant. We hear across the board that the lack of uplift in the funding in the contracts is a major concern. I understand the reason for the lack of uplift in funding, or at least the excuse that the government is giving, which is the commissioning work that has been undertaken by the department, but the services need the support now. The Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence referred to the Western Australian Council of Social Service yesterday; however, another comment it made in the same media statement from which the minister selectively quoted was —

“Additional resources are still needed to ensure that existing FDV services can continue at the same level while the service system is being reformed. There is a very real risk that some organisations may have to cut some services despite growing demand.

These challenges and the lack of uplift ahead of this reform are creating significant issues. The issue of families living in their cars and being turned away because of the extraordinary pressure across the system has been raised with me. We know that housing, or the lack thereof, has a significant role to play. Since June 2020 the number of people waiting to access priority public housing has increased by 316 per cent and the number on the public housing waitlist has grown by over 9 000 people. Obviously, cost-of-living factors are contributing. Even with the one-off \$400 payment, households are still \$650 worse off in this financial year as a result of the accumulated cost-of-living impacts imposed by this government since 2017.

The opposition supports the new investment initiatives that the minister has announced—the commitment to the Armadale family and domestic violence hub, funding for enhanced response teams, the Kimberley family violence services—but that cannot be it. The funding is not keeping pace with these extraordinary demands, and it is not an attempt to even plan for the future. Women and children need these services. This is an unprecedented situation and an unprecedented level of demand. Extraordinarily it comes at a time when the Premier is gloating about the unprecedented wealth of this state. That is why the opposition puts forward this motion, and that is why we ask the minister to take responsibility for her portfolio, listen to the sector and support those vulnerable women and children, because what has been put forward is certainly not enough.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [3.09 pm]: I would like to thank the shadow Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence for this motion and the opportunity to speak on this very important issue. No matter which way we cut this, there is less funding available for those impacted by family and domestic violence than there was last year. That is the bottom line in this budget. The shadow minister succinctly outlined that there is an increase in demand.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am not taking interjections, thank you, minister.

We can contrast that with the fact that there is a continual and growing demand for these services, unfortunately. They are vital, and we want the government to continue to invest to support families that are impacted. I would like to spend the time I have to speak about three issues in particular. They are issues that the minister will be familiar

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with. The first is in relation to DVassist, which is a program that provides support for regional victims or survivors of domestic violence—families, men, women, children; all those who are impacted. The second relates to the question I asked previously around the government's capacity to forgive the debt of those who have to call an ambulance as a result of family or domestic violence, and the third relates to the government's announcement around the new service to support young people who have been impacted by, or exposed to, family and domestic violence, which I think will be delivered in Rockingham, but also in my electorate in Northam and the wheatbelt.

I will start with DVassist, because this is something that the opposition has been asking the government to support. Interestingly, the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, in response to a Dorothy Dixier yesterday, counselled against the opposition campaigning or asking for support for this program. I find that remarkable, given that we know we have a very large state and we cannot possibly have bricks-and-mortar services in every region. It is just impossible. Services like this, which has been created by someone with lived experience—Fleur McDonald from Esperance—seek to fill that gap as this network of support is built across our state. It is horrifying to me that people who live in remote areas of Western Australia are 24 times more likely to end up hospitalised as a result of family and domestic violence than people who live in metropolitan areas. People are three times more likely to be exposed to family and domestic violence and 24 times more likely to end up in hospital if they live in regional Western Australia, compared with those who live in our metropolitan areas. It is shocking no matter where anyone lives, but that is a shocking figure to me. Police crime figures show that in the last decade, recorded family violence-related offences in regional WA have increased steadily by 43 per cent, totalling 14 984 offences committed in 2020. I do not have the latest figures, but that was in 2020 alone. One in five women who live outside capital cities have experienced violence from an intimate partner since they were 15 years old. By comparison, three in 20, or 15 per cent, of women who live within a capital city have experienced violence from an intimate partner. That is ABS data. When we stand to request the Premier to consider providing support to services that are trying to do things a little differently, it is not because we are saying that we are from regional Western Australia and we want the government to help and this is a very deserving program, but because there is a great need. I think we should look at all those programs to try to support those who find themselves victim survivors of family and domestic violence.

DVassist has provided the first virtual regional counselling service that is free across the state. I think it truly is breaking new ground, because it has a determined focus on regional communities. It has delivered the first regional WA domestic violence help line, it is the first regional WA —

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The minister does herself no favours by criticising someone and their organisation that is trying to resolve some of the challenges that her government faces. She does herself no service.

DVassist has provided the first regional WA domestic violence webchat service, and the first regional WA area localised online service directory and online localised information hub. It is a professional outlet, unlike the minister tried to intimate in the answer to her question.

Ms S.F. McGurk: Don't put words in my mouth!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I do not have to; I was in the chamber yesterday when the minister gave her response to the Dorothy Dixier.

The hurdles that regional people face when they seek assistance are specific to regional communities. They include a lack of anonymity; confidentiality difficulties; limited, if any, refuge options; geographical isolation; and social isolation. We know that in smaller communities, there is community support for perpetrators who are considered to be good and respected individuals in that community. There are also transportation issues, with fewer options, and variable access to internet and communications. If someone is trying to extract themselves from a situation, they are faced with additional hurdles when they come to do that. The service reports that since it launched in September 2020, 61 per cent of its calls have been from Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury. Forty-two calls have been from rural, remote and regional areas outside the 16 areas it targeted when it started. It is disappointing that this minister has counselled against the opposition and others advocating on behalf of this service. There is clearly a demonstrated need. With no prospect of having bricks-and-mortar services based in all regions across the state, this is one option that those who are exposed to family and domestic violence can take up. I have to say in DVassist's defence that it is not sitting on its laurels just waiting to be 100 per cent funded by government; it has started to develop partnerships with private sector operators in the regions. But given such significant demand and the feedback it has received since it launched, I would have thought the government would try to support this. Given the financial circumstances of this state—we are flush with cash—that is something we would wholly support if the minister had a change of mind.

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The second issue is the ambulance bills. I have raised this with the minister already. I hope that whatever comes down as a result of the inquiry, which we will hear about tomorrow, and the work the minister is doing, we can find some way to forgive the debt for anyone who calls an ambulance as a result of family and domestic violence and gets a \$1 000 bill. That seems to me to be patently unfair. Women who have been brave enough to tell their stories have told of some really horrifying experiences, but they said they had simply stopped calling police because they could not afford to pay the ambulance bill. It is not just individuals who have been forthcoming on that front. In an article in the *South Western Times* of 12 May, Ali White, who is the chief executive officer of the South West Refuge, said that she has a financial counsellor who is almost wholly dedicated to trying to negotiate with debt collectors on this issue. That is something that we could write a line through. The government could fund that. That would certainly make an enormous difference to women who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances already.

The last thing I want to focus on is the announcement the minister made for a new service for Rockingham and Northam. This was announced as part of the budget to provide support for young people who have been exposed to family and domestic violence. Firstly, I say on the record that I welcome any additional services in my electorate. I welcome the fact that attention has been paid to providing services into the wheatbelt. I have sat in this chamber during estimates and asked questions, particularly when funding programs have come through this minister's portfolio, and asked why we never seem to see pilots or programs coming to the wheatbelt, the upper great southern or parts of the midwest. It is a hard area to service. It is a thinly and sparsely populated area. But I am unhesitating in my support for any additional services that can come to the electorate. I am pleased that it is focused on the fact that young people are caught up in this horrible situation and are impacted by family and domestic violence. Interestingly—I am hopeful that the minister can shed some light on this—these services will be delivered by the Australian Childhood Foundation in partnership with the Youth Affairs Council of WA and Karla Kuliny Aboriginal Corporation. The service model will be guided by the lived experience of members of the youth steering group and a sector reference group with representation from agencies, Aboriginal organisations and elders.

The alarm bell rang for me when I put a call in to the organisation that provides a majority of these services in the electorate. Share and Care Community Services is based in Northam but covers the wheatbelt and midwest as well. It has been around since 1975. Carol, who is the CEO, knows how to extract a dollar out of any government of any persuasion. She is an exceptional individual who has worked incredibly hard on a shoestring budget for many, many years. They do a wonderful job. Disappointingly, there had been no contact with Share and Care Community Services, and it received a phone call only as a result of us calling and asking whether it was aware that this was being announced. I hope that we are not going to see a model whereby an organisation from Perth delivers into the wheatbelt because that is doomed to fail. I watch organisations do that, or try to do that, on a regular basis, whether they are delivering aged-care services or other services.

I am passing on the concerns of Share and Care and Avon Youth Community and Family Services: first, neither were consulted; and, second, why did the government not contact existing place-based services, such as Share and Care, which have such an intimate knowledge of the region to assist in the delivery of this funding? I know from experience, no matter how well meaning and experienced organisations are, if we do not have place-based solutions, we will see these services fail. We know there is a big job to do. I encourage the minister on this front to make sure that the providers are engaging in-depth with people in the wheatbelt to make sure that we make this a success.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.20 pm]: I rise to reiterate the support that I have for this excellent motion that has been moved by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party at a time when a reduction in services is being forecast in the budget. Whichever way that is cut, a 17 per cent reduction in resources at a time when the state is sitting on a \$5.7 billion surplus is a disgrace. From the case prosecuted by the member for Vasse, we see a rise in cases of 17 per cent. I understand from what she said that the Western Australia Police Force reports that over the period of this government, the number of cases being reported has increased by 19 per cent. As regional members, we know that, according to WAPOL, domestic violence is three times more likely to occur in regional areas and someone is 24 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of one of those interactions. Regional people know full well how important it is to have local services that can be relied upon.

The Leader of the National Party has made a good case for concern around drive-in drive-out servicing of the wheatbelt from Midland and elsewhere. In fact, at its last state conference the National Party had on its books a motion condemning the practice of what is called the white cars rolling out into regional areas from Perth or from a major regional centre to those smaller centres, delivering a service for a couple of hours, popping back in the car and going back again. They do not give follow-up, continuity or understanding of the regional circumstances that a place-based provider would be able to give.

It is shocking to think that women fleeing domestic violence who have to call an ambulance because of an injury or an event are being pursued for debts in this manner. I reiterate the call that the Leader of the Opposition has made

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for the government to draw a line through these debts. It could be a very simple matter. It is not a big item for the government, but it is a huge item for people who are caught up in this terrible situation. It is unbelievable that they would be pursued for ambulance debt at a time like this.

I would also like to reiterate the concern around the lack of funding to and the lack of concern the minister has shown to pleas for funding of the DVassist hotline. I went out there when that service began.

[Member's time expired.]

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) [3.23 pm]: First and foremost, what is incredibly frustrating about the cornerstone of the opposition's attacks on this motion is a lack of understanding of how to read the budget papers. Under national partnership agreements, the federal government and the state governments agree that the federal government will provide funding. Member for Vasse, you might want to pay attention. Get off your phone and pay attention, because it is clear that no matter how often we say it in the house, you fail to understand these very basic questions of how to read the budget papers. Under national partnership agreements, the federal government reaches an agreement with us, the state government, that it will contribute a certain amount of money and the state delivers the money. The money gets put into the state budget papers as NPA money. It is explained. It is not as though it is a complex issue that is beyond people. Even someone who does the most basic reading of the papers can follow this. Page 531 of the budget papers says that the money that the member is talking about falls away because of the time-limited national partnership agreement contributions by the federal government.

I said yesterday in question time that I was critical; in the past, the partnership agreements have been for four or five years. These COVID-related funding agreements were for two years and for small amounts. If the member wants to criticise anyone for cutting funding or providing time-limited funding or not enough funding, perhaps she wants to look at her own federal counterparts, because the reduction over the forward estimates is a reduction in federal funding, not state funding. I do not know how many times we need to explain that to the member. It is very basic.

Similarly, the criticism of DVassist is staggering. We had no consultation on or input to this. The federal government put in money for DVassist, and the federal government decided not to provide ongoing money for DVassist, but the only call from the opposition is that the state government should come in and fix what the federal government has failed to provide long-term funding for. It is based in Subiaco, and that is a fact. Whatever I think of DVassist, we are not in a position to chase after the federal government and fix its funding shortfalls. We are not in a position to do that. I do not know what sort of advocacy the member has provided to her federal counterparts to say that they should not provide short-term funding or two-year funding under the national partnership agreement and they should provide ongoing funding and that should be reflected in the budget papers. There have been no cuts to services or domestic violence budget line items. There have been only increases. If the member understood the budget papers, she would understand that point.

I said before in question time that providing more resources is important. I do not deny that and we have demonstrated our commitment to doing that since coming to office. An amount of \$150 million in the five years of being in office is a significant uplift in resources to the sector. The attention and extra resources that we have given to this area has been marked. We have also provided a strategic approach, and that is to work together with the sector to say, "Look, there is a lot to do. How do we make sure that if we are providing safety for women and children, we are doing it in a way that is culturally appropriate for them? How do we make them safe places for them to come forward and places where they can stay for longer if they need to?" The first therapeutic refuge is an example of that. The hubs are also community based. People can come in for advice and there is information sharing at those locations so that people do not have to retell their stories. They have a number of services under one roof. They are the sorts of innovative approaches that we are taking as a government, and we are not doing it alone. We are doing it in partnership with the sector and with researchers and others who provide us evidence-based advice on how to best approach these complex issues.

I listed 26 different items that we have done since coming to office. I do not think I will have the time to run through all of them. First and foremost, we developed a 10-year strategy because there is so much to do. We want to make sure that what we do is the best, evidence tells us it works, it is done in partnership and it takes into account the breadth and the need of these complex issues across our state. We now have a 10-year strategy and we are working our way through that. We have two new refuges; one is the therapeutic refuge and the other in Kwinana. We have a second residential-based perpetrator program. We have two one-stop hubs, one in Mirrabooka and one in Kalgoorlie, with a further two to be established in Armadale and the Kimberley. We have extended counselling services in Peel and the north metropolitan area. We have set up the RSPCA Pets in Crisis program.

We have nation-leading law reform that I have done in cooperation with the Attorney General, picking up on the 2014 Law Reform Commission report. That is something that the previous government did not even touch. That report was handed down in 2014; it was a very comprehensive analysis that we picked up on, and we implemented

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nearly all the recommendations. The former government did not touch it and it had time to do that. We made changes to the Criminal Code, bail, restraining orders and sentencing to protect victims. We created new criminal offences for non-fatal strangulation and persistent family violence. We commissioned an Aboriginal family safety strategy, something that was called for by Aboriginal advocates nationally as well as in this state. It is a different way of approaching domestic violence in Aboriginal communities. We began that work, which is being led by Aboriginal women and Aboriginal leaders. It is something that, federally, the government was criticised for, but in WA, we picked up that work.

We introduced antenatal screening in the public health system to support women who are about to give, or have just given, birth. Since coming to office, we have improved police protocols and training—it is a massive change—with a complete overhaul of police protocols for domestic and family violence and we have trained all frontline police staff in the new protocols.

We improved the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 to ensure that victims are not left to pay for damage or debts for which they are not responsible. We introduced shuttle conferencing in courts to make it less traumatic for victims of FDV. We invested in practical supports for victim survivors, such as the funds for freedom program, which provides grants to purchase household items and other items—for instance, ambulance cover for victim survivors.

We introduced paid leave and other measures for public sector employees, which was opposed by not only the previous Premier Colin Barnett, but also Senator Michaelia Cash. She opposed paid leave for domestic violence victims, which is absolutely outrageous. It is very straightforward and simple and has now been picked up by a large section of the private sector as well as the Fair Work Commission. We amended the Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993 to provide for five days' unpaid domestic violence leave in the private sector, established a trial of the Caring Dads program, implemented the Respectful Relationships Teaching Support Program in schools and introduced an electronic bracelet trial for high-risk offenders. The 16 Days in WA campaign is a huge campaign that has gains momentum every year and brings along corporates, community groups, the community and the whole state to see what can be done to get the message out about FDV. We delivered our election commitment to expand the Safer Pathways program to make sure that women can stay in their houses and are supported by organisations to stay in their tenancies and lead a safe and stable future.

We have awarded nearly \$1 million in grants for prevention activities, including funds for the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing. That is how you pronounce the name of the organisation, member for Vasse; it is the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing. It is a peak body that represents domestic violence, sexual assault and women's health services. The member for Vasse might want to learn how to say its name if she is going to do grievances on the issue. The centre has done a prevention framework that, I think, will be very useful to make sure that we can expand the work of prevention in our community. We have also commenced consultation on coercive control laws.

There is so much that we have done as a government—it has been quite wide-reaching. Do we have more to do? Yes; we do not deny that. Anyone who says that we will get magical results in domestic violence turnaround if we just put in more money is kidding themselves and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the deep-rooted nature of not only the origins of domestic violence, but also how it presents. During question time, I spoke about issues such as coercive control, as an example. Increasingly, the community is understanding that the way domestic violence manifests can be very subtle at times but, very, very destructive and, at times, lethal. We need to understand that not only in terms of law reform, but also as a whole community—how services respond, as well as what we, in the community, can do. That may be how we can do that in Parliament—and in, perhaps, the member for Vasse paying attention—and community organisations, such as sporting organisations and the like, and by employers understanding what they need to do in their industries to better respond to domestic violence and violence against women in all its forms. It can also be around dinner tables. We need to understand the language that we use and the effort that we make to understand what is going on. That will be the only way that we will ever really start to turn around violence against women.

There are many examples. We have talked about Parliament House in Canberra and the obvious failing by the Prime Minister to provide leadership in responding to a sexual assault report in Parliament House. There has also been a very rude wake-up call in the mining industry about the extent of assaults. I have to say that within the opposition, a former Leader of the Liberal Party has now pleaded guilty to domestic violence charges. This is widespread, and if we think that it is not amongst us in our community, we are kidding ourselves—it is everywhere. It is in our cities, suburbs, regional areas and remote areas, and it is quite likely that any one of us has either experienced such violence or knows someone who has experienced that violence, whether or not we know about it. We do not need lectures from the opposition, which has just woken up to the issue about how to respond to domestic violence. The government has been working hard on this issue for the last five years, and it is not something that is easily turned around. Work needs to be done across all areas to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators to account. It is a very complex area and there is not a lot of evidence on how to do this effectively and make sure that our justice system is up to the task while also making sure that the community is on board. The opposition's cheap

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pots shots and its basic illiteracy of the budget papers does its cause in advocating for more effort in domestic violence no benefit at all.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [3.36 pm]: I wish to add to this debate as the Minister for Housing; Homelessness. As we know, there is a strong correlation between women who flee domestic violence and homelessness. I want to put on the record that there is an upper house parliamentary inquiry into homelessness and my agencies have already made significant submissions that outline in detail much of what the Minister for Community Services has gone through. There is a huge and significant investment in both homelessness and connected services for preventing, and assisting victims of, domestic violence. This year, we will spend \$190 million on a range of initiatives and projects. As the Minister for Housing; Homelessness, obviously I come to this responsible for the building crisis and transitional accommodation and additional housing to address these issues. I work hand in hand with the Minister for Community Services. The work that the Minister for Community Services has outlined is one part of the picture. The other part is supporting the accommodation and the capital infrastructure spend. I note that only recently, our government announced a major new injection of funding for both community housing providers and crisis accommodation. We announced the social housing economic recovery package of \$39 million for new builds—new beds—in both social or community housing and crisis accommodation, which includes the building of a new crisis accommodation facility for vulnerable people and victims of family and domestic violence in the south west. We also committed another \$58 million in grant funding, which has been awarded to 47 housing providers to undertake refurbishment of 805 existing properties. This includes funding for Albany Youth Support Association for young people who might have been pushed out of home due to violence, Broome Community Housing Ltd, Newman Women's Shelter, Geraldton Community Housing Ltd and Zonta House Refuge Association.

There is a clear investment by our state government to support the community housing sector and crisis accommodation. We are also particularly focused on supporting Aboriginal people who may need transitional accommodation. This does not actually get a lot of attention, but there clearly is an issue and it is an issue in the city. I will give an example. I am on the public record about tent cities. Often the majority of these people are Aboriginal people from the regions who may come to Perth for medical, cultural or family reasons and so forth. Unfortunately, those camps can put women and children at risk. It is a concern. Certainly as a state, particularly looking at the CBD, we are driving a new coordinated approach with the communities and the WA Police Force to assist in these scenarios and assist people get back home and return to country, for example. To date, in the city this year, through our concerted efforts across agencies, we have—I was last advised—been able to assist 37 people return to country. I refer to this because the budget contains funding to assist in addressing this issue. We are investing \$59 million in three new Aboriginal short-stay accommodation premises. These are dedicated, culturally appropriate and designed accommodation that provides transitional accommodation to avoid the kinds of scenarios that I have just talked about when a number of Aboriginal people from country camp out at a particular location near the city. We are building them in Kununurra, Geraldton and Perth. We are working on the Perth location now. That is significant investment right there to assist with providing some of our most vulnerable Western Australians with safe transitional or short-term accommodation, which is ultimately trying to assist them also to get home safely and avoid the scenarios that I have described that occur from time to time in the city. In reference to the most recent tent city encampment, I want to put on the record that my department has been out every day actively engaging and offering accommodation and support, and has got 37 people to return to country.

There is another part that I mentioned in a Dorothy—in a question that I received —

Several members interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I nearly slipped there! I think I did.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Sorry? I do appreciate that.

The remote communities fund is another substantial investment that will obviously, at its heart, tackle the living conditions of Aboriginal people in remote communities. We know the complex challenges and issues in those communities. We are deeply aware of them. There is a long history to this. I say this sincerely: I think one media outlet gave it attention, but \$350 million is a very strong start to working hard in those communities to lift basic standards and tackle issues like overcrowding. It will fund upgrades to water and power and it will also tackle getting ageing housing stock back into the system, where we can. Throughout the years, there have been about 2 700 houses in 112 remote Aboriginal communities that we, as an agency, interact with. We need to try to bring housing stock back online, and the Aboriginal remote housing fund has been created to do that, recognising, as always—I know I say this on repeat—that we face a heated construction market and that there are challenges to delivery. But we never give up and we will look at every opportunity to pivot our agencies to deliver.

I think the Minister for Community Services went through a very long list of all the initiatives in legal reforms, new protections and new programs to drive innovation and provide new support. I present to members that although we

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have focused on service delivery, from the housing and homelessness side, there is a substantial investment and we have been supporting both the community housing and crisis accommodation through \$39 million for new builds, \$58 million in grant funding for refurbishments and we are also working in particular to support Aboriginal people through a \$59 million investment for three new Aboriginal short-stay accommodation facilities in Perth. We are also assisting to tackle the tough issues in remote Aboriginal communities with the \$350 million remote community fund.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.46 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the debate on what I think, frankly, is a fairly absurd motion brought forward by the opposition this afternoon. I think it is fair to say that nobody denies the need for providing as much resourcing as we can possibly bring to address the scourge of family and domestic violence. It is pleasing to hear that the opposition seems to be coming around to the realisation that we need to have a serious conversation about family and domestic violence, because, as I will talk about, it has been a very long time coming before it has started to take family and domestic violence and, indeed, community services and social policy, seriously. It is long overdue.

Nobody denies that over the last 12 months in particular there has been an extraordinary amount of additional pressure placed on families, communities and the support services that reach out and provide assistance. I want to put on record the gratitude we have to all those social service providers who have gone above and beyond. They have been on the frontline of this pandemic and it is important that we acknowledge and thank them for all the support they have provided. This afternoon, the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence talked in her contribution about the need for a strategic approach. That was long overdue. She went through the various ways the government has already sought to seriously attack family and domestic violence. She emphasised the need to change the way that we do things. She has said today and in contributions in this place over the last couple of weeks that there is much to do. There is a lot of catching up to do. Under the former government, this issue—this series of incredibly complex problems—was neglected for an extraordinarily long time. This government is taking it seriously. We are the first government to have appointed a Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. That is worthy of acknowledgement. This government has made a record \$150 million investment in family and domestic violence. In this budget is \$160 million of new money for the community sector and \$60 million in this budget alone for family and domestic violence.

The Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence and the Minister for Housing have gone through what we have done, but this motion gives me a fantastic opportunity to talk about what this budget will deliver for the prevention of family and domestic violence. The \$60 million election commitment is made up of a \$29.5 million Safe Home Safe Family package for women and children fleeing violence. Two additional one-stop family and domestic violence hubs will be established to make it easier for women to access help and not go through the traumatic experience of having to retell their story over and over again. The \$29.5 million package will expand the safer pathways program to Mirrabooka and Midland—I see that the member for Mirrabooka is in the chamber—which will provide intensive case management, risk assessment and safety planning for public housing tenants when family and domestic violence has been the primary cause of a tenancy breakdown. There will be a rapid rehousing program providing rental assistance to help women set up their new home—the new place they have been forced to flee to. We will be expanding the Safe at Home program to provide safety planning and security upgrades to help women feel safe in their homes. I also note that we are doing the same thing for seniors—helping seniors feel safer in their homes.

The minister also mentioned, as did the Minister for Housing, the law reform package that the Attorney General is championing to hold perpetrators to account. This is the first time that a government has seriously tackled that issue. There will be a \$7.3 million boost to prevent family and domestic violence by expanding the Respectful Relationships program into schools; training frontline responders to better recognise and respond to family and domestic violence; and developing a primary prevention framework to build the capacity of communities and government to implement effective prevention activities that identify and challenge the norms that drive violence against women. There will be \$4 million invested in supporting initiatives for survivors, including continued practical supports for survivors. It is just the basic stuff, such as driving lessons or dental treatment for women who are exiting refuges. Family violence counselling programs will be established for teenagers, who are so very often damaged by their experiences. There are changes to provide family and domestic violence survivors with five days' unpaid domestic violence leave, which we introduced last year.

In addition, we will continue to implement other important initiatives. The minister spoke about the 10-year path to safety, which is our strategy to reduce family and domestic violence, and the Department of Communities has well progressed the implementation strategy for that initiative. We will review our family violence reform after considering our response on coercive control laws. We will establish an east metropolitan women's refuge to provide 10 purpose-built crisis accommodation rooms and supported transitional accommodation units for a further 18 women. We will implement a family safety strategy.

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 18 May 2022]
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We are committed, and we will continue to be committed, to stopping violence before it starts. We introduced the 16 Days in WA program. It is great to see the opposition get on board and support that every year, but the various stakeholders across the community and in the private sector are also helping us to promote community action to address violence against women. It is that cultural change that we need to see.

This has raised the profile of the issues, and we will continue to do that. Let us be very real here. Where is the opposition's condemnation of the federal government's absolute white-anting of FDV initiatives in this state? What is it doing about that? Where is it calling for that? It is rank hypocrisy. Members opposite stand in this place and talk about it, but they are doing nothing to advocate on their own side. It is a pattern of behaviour. Family and domestic violence is about patterns of behaviour and they have their own to confront.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting his vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

Mr V.A. Catania	Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam
Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (40)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms J.L. Hanns	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms A. Sanderson
Mr G. Baker	Mr M. Hughes	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mr D.A.E. Scaife
Ms H.M. Beazley	Mr W.J. Johnston	Ms L.A. Munday	Ms J.J. Shaw
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr H.T. Jones	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr J.N. Carey	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr P. Papalia	Dr K. Stratton
Ms C.M. Collins	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr S.J. Price	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Mr M.J. Folkard	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Ms R. Saffioti	Ms E.L. Hamilton (<i>Teller</i>)

Question thus negatived.