

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — PEEL REFUGE

304. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to provide more crisis accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. Can the minister update the house about the new therapeutic refuge for the Peel and advise how it will support women to get their lives back on track?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

It is important that people understand the extent of the work that is done in refuges around the state. I acknowledge that there is an increasing understanding in Australia, particularly in Western Australia, that we have a problem with domestic violence, and I think there is a commitment across all parties to do something about that. How do we intervene effectively for victims and survivors of domestic violence, who are often women with children? How do we intervene effectively and make sure that services are best placed to deal with the complex issues surrounding domestic violence? Sadly, many victims of domestic violence also experience mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, financial challenges and the like, and that is why in planning for the new refuge in Peel, we are looking to co-locate a number of services to make sure that the fundamentals are right in a therapeutic approach for people who need assistance at that refuge. We know that we have very good services around the state for mental health assistance, drug and alcohol abuse and the like, but we often struggle to co-locate them and make sure that we surround those vulnerable people when they need it and not expect them to traverse their way through different services because they do not. They do not make their way through those services but fall through the cracks and the cycle of disadvantage is repeated. We have consulted with the sector about the new refuge in Peel. We have looked at best practice around the country and the world and we are looking to ensure that from the very beginning, the therapeutic model has a number of integrated services for survivors of domestic violence. In that way, we will be much better placed to break the cycle of domestic violence and ensure that survivors and their children are able to move on, after having been provided with some safety by the refuge, to live happy, fulfilling and, importantly, safe lives.