

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — 2017–18 STATE BUDGET

462. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to this government's commitment to ensuring we support the victims of domestic and family violence. What measures are in this budget to break the cycle of this unacceptable abuse and address this shameful crisis?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I thank the member for her question. Unfortunately, the Peel region is disproportionately represented in domestic violence offence statistics. We need to make sure that there are good and effective on-the-ground services in that region, and we are setting out to do just that. I am very pleased that in the budget we were able to deliver over \$12 million in funding to improve services to people experiencing domestic violence. That will be in the form of two new refuges. One refuge will be in the metropolitan area and one will be in regional WA. We were able to put more money into perpetrator intervention, which is an important area. It is one thing for perpetrators to be held to account for their actions, as they should be, but we also need effective counselling and intervention so that people who want to change are given the services, the means and support to do so. In any year in the last couple of years, over 50 000 cases of family and domestic violence incidents have been reported to police. A high number of those reports to police involved children; children were either offended against or witnessed the violence, which is very traumatic for children. We also dedicated money to make sure that we have services that are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal communities—Aboriginal families and women and children who are experiencing violence—and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, which have their own needs. We need to make sure that our responses on the ground understand what is happening to those families and what is happening to those communities and, in particular, we have a safe place to which women and children can come to seek support.

We also allocated money to respectful relationships interventions; that is, trying to do some prevention work in our community so that people understand that violence in any form is not acceptable and that violence towards intimate partners in the home is certainly not acceptable and is a criminal act, which will not be tolerated in any form. That is on top of a number of actions that we have already taken, such as signing onto Our Watch, introducing leave for public servants who need support when they are experiencing domestic violence, and encouraging private industry to do the same. I was very pleased to hear that Rio Tinto announced domestic violence leave for over 19 000 of its own employees across the country, at our urging. Of course, there are the measures that the Attorney General has helped put in place with the national recognition scheme for family violence restraining orders. Those are all measures that show that this government will not tolerate domestic violence. We will support victims, hold perpetrators to account and turn the shameful scourge of domestic violence around.