

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE —
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS — FOURTH ACTION PLAN

703. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the recent agreement by the Council of Australian Governments to implement the fourth action plan for reducing violence against women and their children.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what this action plan means for the work that the government is undertaking to reduce family and domestic violence?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this builds on the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented commitment towards the prevention of family and domestic violence?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I thank the member very much for this question and her interest in this issue.

- (1)–(2) The Premier was at the COAG meeting with other first ministers not long ago and was able to commit Western Australia to the fourth action plan for reducing violence against women and their children. This builds on previous work when there is a national strategy, as there should be, to try to tackle this very difficult, but persistent, social issue. We are doing what we can in this state, but we are not the only ones who are experiencing high levels of domestic violence. It is important that, as much as possible, we have a concerted effort across the country.

The particular emphasis in the fourth action plan is on prevention—the idea that we can change attitudes in our community that have led to the high rates of violence that we see against women in particular, but, in general, in family and domestic violence, and also understanding that different people in our community experience that violence in different ways. For instance, understanding the context for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities is going to be really important. If we want to respond effectively to that violence, we have to understand how, for instance, women might be able to feel safe to come forward and seek assistance. That will be different for CALD women and Aboriginal women, for example. Women with disabilities or older women might have particular issues that need to be addressed.

Of course, as the member outlined, the McGowan Labor government has committed significant funds since coming to office—over \$53 million in new funding on top of existing resources—to tackle domestic violence in our state. There is still a lot to do. I notice that the federal government has committed a headline figure of \$328 million for the fourth action plan, and, of course, I am doing everything I can to make sure that it understands what our needs are in Western Australia. Members might remember that I was critical of the federal government for pulling money from the keeping women safe in their home program. They have put some of that money back in, but a lesser amount. We need to make sure that WA gets a share of that money and, importantly, it is put into evidence-based response, and that we are united and clear about where we are dedicating these resources.

Members may have seen the news just last week that a young 26-year-old woman, Kayla Rose Halnan, was shot in Welshpool. It is absolutely tragic. I know the member for Murray–Wellington knew Kayla Rose, as did her daughter. It is absolutely tragic. Incredibly, I am not sure whether he was her boyfriend, but one-time state light heavyweight champion Vencent Caruana has been charged with that murder, so it is quite likely that domestic violence was involved. In any case, it is the violent murder of a 26-year-old woman, which is completely unacceptable. Sometimes these cases get a lot of media and public attention; other times, they do not. Perhaps people might take the time to think about Kayla Rose and her family and friends, who I know are devastated by her death.