

COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD AND CHILDCARE CENTRES

361. Mr M. HUGHES to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the significant financial burden that was placed on community neighbourhood and childcare centres, such as Roleystone Family Centre, by the former Liberal–National government’s heartless decision to cut accommodation assistance. Can the minister outline to the house how the McGowan Labor government has reversed those cuts and is supporting those centres?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very pleased to confirm that, as a result of some hard work on the part of the Department of Communities, we will reinstate support to 64 community neighbourhood centres, community-based childcare centres and neighbourhood centres across the state. As the member referred to, that includes Roleystone Family Centre, which as it turns out is in the electorate of Darling Range. We are particularly pleased. There is any number of these centres; in fact, there are 64 of them.

I went out to the Roleystone Family Centre last year and I commend the work of chair Pat Hart and her community there. The organisation is doing a fantastic job. The not-for-profit runs playgroups and all sorts of services. People can go to the drop-in centre. In fact, when we were out there, they organised for a small quenda to come out and see us in the bush just outside. It is a fantastic organisation. Two years ago, the Liberal–National government cut this sort of support and even though it was a relatively small amount of money, it created a huge amount of uncertainty throughout the sector because these are all not-for-profit services. They have a range of different lease agreements or pay a peppercorn rent to either their local council or the state government and support is provided by the Department of Communities. Those organisations provide childcare services, which are important for working families. People can maintain their work commitments and access local, quality childcare services. Those neighbourhood centres also provide a really important connection for the local community. It is a fantastic outcome.

If members opposite think that the McGowan government delivers only to seats in government-held areas, I point out that a range of different communities are impacted by this change, including the Willetton Child Care Centre, and, importantly, the Granny Glasgow Day Care Centre in Carnarvon. It was particularly rich of the member for North West Central to send me a letter asking whether our government would reverse the accommodation cuts that his government put in place.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: You are joking. It was particularly galling to get that letter. It was pathetic.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister, through the Chair!

Ms S.F. McGURK: Mr Speaker, I am very happy to say to you that it was particularly pathetic to get a letter from the member for North West Central asking us to reverse a decision of the government of which he was a part.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, it does not matter.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am pleased. I am sure Granny Glasgow Day Care Centre does a fantastic job, as do Birra-Li in Willagee, the Collie Child Care and Early Learning Centre, the Leederville Early Childhood Centre and the Moolanda Care and Learning Centre, which I visited recently. A range of organisations are doing a fantastic job and we are supporting them every way that we can.