

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — INITIATIVES

725. Mr R.R. WHITBY to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to tackling the disgraceful scourge of family and domestic violence, which is an incredibly difficult issue to deal with, and far from simple. Can the minister advise the house what action this government has taken so far this year to support victims and prevent this awful crime?

Ms S.F. MCGURK replied:

I thank the member for the question. Members of this house have heard me speak a number of times about these issues, and they will continue to hear me speak about them until the violence stops. I have spoken before to say that 50 000 cases are reported to police each year; that is 1 000 cases a week. We also know that only about 20 per cent of cases are actually reported, so 80 per cent of cases of family and domestic violence go unreported.

We need this level of violence to stop. As I have spoken about before in this house, the government has a number of different measures to ensure that victims are supported, that women and children are supported and protected, that perpetrators are called to account, and that we actually change the conversation in our community. I have outlined before that, since being elected, we have implemented a range of policy commitments. We have signed on to Our Watch, the national prevention organisation. We have instigated 10 days' paid leave for public servants who are experiencing family violence and need support. We have supported the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals so that if women need to leave the family home, their pets can be looked after. We have backed up our election commitments in the budget and will put more than \$8 million into two new refuges. We will put nearly \$1.7 million into culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal-specific responses, so that our responses are embedded in the circumstances in which that violence occurs.

Many members would have seen the "Stop the Violence" badges that we are wearing. They are orange badges, and every member will be given one if they do not already have one. I urge them to wear that badge. This Saturday, 25 November, is White Ribbon Day. It is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It is an important day internationally, but it also is the commencement of the "16 Days in WA" campaign that marks 16 days in which we want to raise awareness in this state that violence needs to stop. The campaign's message is not only that men and all of us should not be violent—obviously, that is the case—but also that we have to call out the sexist and demeaning attitudes that give licence to the violence in the first place. All men have a role to play in the campaign and I urge people to participate in "16 Days in WA". A range of public buildings will be lit up orange around the metropolitan area and the state. Important and august buildings, including the State Theatre and the new Perth Stadium, will be lit up, thanks to the Minister for Sport and Recreation's efforts and assisted by Brookfield Multiplex. Important public buildings such as my electorate office will also be lit up orange. I urge members to participate in "16 Days in WA" and let us try to reduce family and domestic violence in this state.