

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — ONE-STOP HUBS

**344. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:**

Before I ask my question, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the member for Kalamunda, the presence of year 9 students from Carmel Adventist College and their accompanying teachers who are visiting Parliament today.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting those who experience family and domestic violence. Can the minister update the house on how this government's funding commitment of almost \$12 million for the delivery of new family and domestic violence one-stop hubs will help protect victims and reduce the unacceptably high rates of domestic violence?

**Ms S.F. McGURK replied:**

I am very pleased to answer this question. Members in this house may be aware that just before our question time there was a debate in the other house on domestic violence and this government's response to it. In my role as Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, and when I visit services and speak to the public, I am continually amazed to hear, as I did in that debate, how people disclose their own experiences of domestic violence. It is an issue that touches too many Western Australians, including many in this Parliament.

I am very proud to meet another election commitment with the government's pre-budget announcement of funding of \$11.7 million for the establishment of two domestic violence hubs—one in Mirrabooka and one in Kalgoorlie. The idea behind domestic violence hubs is that they provide an alternative entry point for people experiencing domestic violence to come forward and get advice and assistance. At the moment, victims may obtain a restraining order, get legal advice, go to the police or go to a women's refuge or health service. The idea of hubs is for there to be a co-location of services such as legal and medical advice, financial advice, housing and the like. Victims can access a range of different advice from specialist services, and those services will be co-located so that victims do not have to re-tell their stories a number of times. There is a sharing of information, which is very important. Many members in this chamber will be familiar with the George Jones Child Advocacy Centre, for instance, which provides co-located specialist services very well. Specialists working in collaboration is the best model we have for dealing with vulnerable people—in this case, victims of domestic violence.

In all of our responses to some of these very complex issues of domestic violence, we are trying to look at the best evidence for approaching them, and that is what we have done with our model to put together the new refuges we have announced, and with the services provided by the domestic violence hubs. That is in sharp contrast with the response by the federal government, which recently announced just over \$2 million for a new service in Western Australia. A number of representatives of the domestic violence sector were critical of that allocation because there was no evidence that that service had any track record of providing services or any processes around that provision. There was some concern about making those sorts of announcements. We really need to make sure that there is good evidence, good processes and good evaluation of the work that is being done when we make funding allocations.

Similarly, members will be aware that the federal government stopped funding for the keeping women safe in their home program, through which victims could stay in their house and have the perpetrators moved out. The state government had to provide \$500 000 to prop up those services in Western Australia because the federal government pulled its funding. In fact, the federal government has since reinstated that funding to recommence after the federal election. The federal government has said that if it is re-elected, it will reinstate the funding—so there is a huge gap in funding that the state government has had to prop up, either because the federal government could not get its act together to provide continuity of funding or because it wanted to hold off on the re-announcement of the funding of that program as an election commitment. I think that is very, very poor practice. I commend the federal Labor Party for coming in early and committing to funding the keeping women safe in their home program.

I am very proud of the new funding that the state government has put into domestic violence—more than \$30 million in this state budget, and more than \$53 million in new funding for the prevention of family and domestic violence in Western Australia.