

ABORIGINAL FAMILY SAFETY — SUMMIT

Statement by Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) [12.21 pm]:
Every brief ministerial statement should have an opportunity to thank the member for Collie–Preston; is that right!

I rise today to tell this place about a summit that I was privileged to be involved in last week on Aboriginal family safety. As the state's first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, I have told this place before that I am acutely aware of the disproportionate impact of family violence on Aboriginal women, children, men, families and communities. The summit was inspired by a number of Aboriginal women, experts in their fields and advocates in their communities, who had spoken to me over the last couple of years about needing to focus on positive outcomes and of working for family safety and community safety.

We know that Aboriginal women and children are at greater risk of family violence. Aboriginal women are twice as likely to be the victims of partner homicides and are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence when compared with non-Indigenous Australians. Governments have not always done well at listening and working with Aboriginal people—I think of the recent State Coroner's report—and I know that there is plenty of room for improvement in front of us. The McGowan government is committed to this improvement and to strengthening its relationship with Aboriginal communities. Part of this work involves strengthening our approach to working alongside Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal family safety summit was a solid example of working alongside Aboriginal people and communities in Western Australia. The summit involved more than 50 Aboriginal women and men from around the state, representing community-controlled organisations, Aboriginal-focused community services in health, family and domestic violence prevention and legal services, as well as public servants. Many in the room spoke about leadership from not only government, but also community when it comes to turning around the all too prevalent experience of family and domestic violence in the lives of Aboriginal people. The event provided a crucial opportunity for me to listen to the Aboriginal community, and to strengthen our relationship and understanding. There is still plenty of work in front of us and we need to be ambitious. Long-lasting change will take time and occasionally we will make mistakes, but if we remain committed to working together alongside community, we will have a better chance of delivering the change we all want to see.