

NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY SERVICES

767. Ms E. HAMILTON to the Minister for Community Services:

Can the minister update the house on how the McGowan Labor government is delivering on its commitment to work more closely with the not-for-profit community services sector, build stronger relationships and deliver more security for services? Can the minister also outline to the house how this commitment will deliver positive outcomes for Western Australians and greater support for these organisations?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very happy to speak on this topic. Before the last state election, the McGowan team—I was part of the delegation—went to the not-for-profit sector represented by the Western Australian Council of Social Service, but we also met with a range of individual agencies and asked how we could work with them to make WA a better community and make their work easier. They raised with us a number of key issues around procurement, and making sure that there was more security around contract length, that there was uniformity around reporting requirements across state government agencies, and that there was collaboration as a default—as an automatic right—on the way tenders were written. That is of course important, because most of those community organisations rely very heavily on grants and contracts with the state and various levels of government, including different agencies across state government, and they spend a lot of time acquitting those grants. No sooner have they received one lot of grant funding than they have to acquit another lot and get on with making yet more applications.

Anyway, we worked with them. We took a commitment to the last state election called the Supporting Communities policy. I was very happy to work with the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance last week to announce our policy that ensures that the \$1.5 billion that the state government spent on the community sector in 2017–18 is put to good use under a framework that supports the community sector in partnership with government. We were able to deliver on a number of those items that the community sector across the state asked for, including longer contracts, with five years as a default; working collaboratively in determining the criteria for funding arrangements; and making sure that we are concentrating on outcomes, not outputs. We are doing more work around refining that criteria. We did that through the Supporting Communities forum, which is the peak consultation forum with directors general and leaders in the not-for-profit sector. That has been working very effectively. I am very proud of that policy.

Several members interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: It would be good if people across the other side of the chamber were listening to this, because we often talk about these difficult social issues —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! Oh, we are pointing now, are we? It is like kindergarten.

Ms S.F. McGURK: We often talk about difficult social issues and people have opinions about how we tackle them. It is quite clear that government by itself will not be able to resolve those issues. The community sector on its own will not be able to resolve those issues. The community will not be able to resolve those issues. We all need to work together. This policy, whereby we have really moved ahead in our procurement policy across all state government agencies, is an important step to that end.