

KEEPING WOMEN SAFE IN THEIR HOMES PROGRAM

744. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting those affected by family and domestic violence.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the outcomes of the recent Council of Australian Governments national summit on reducing violence against women and the meeting of women's safety ministers?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house on whether the commonwealth has agreed to continue to fund the vital Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program.

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

- (1)–(2) This is a good question. Members might be aware that last week—it was to coincide with the Council of Australian Governments meeting—the women's safety ministers met in Adelaide as part of a summit on reducing violence against women, which was working to develop the fourth action plan to combat domestic violence in this country. We are just coming to the end of the third action plan. It was a constructive meeting and there is no doubt that it was good to meet with other ministers to look at the best practices and innovative programs that are taking place in other states. That was all constructive. A little more concerning, however, was the response from the federal government from both the federal Minister for Women, Kelly O'Dwyer, and the Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, about whether any resources would be attached to that fourth action plan. Our focus is drawn to the fact that the funding we got from the last action plan is coming to an end. At the end of this month, the funding that was attached to a program called Keeping Women Safe in their Homes will come to an end. That program, for just under \$1.5 million—not a lot of money—kept over 750 women safe over 13 months. Instead of them having to relocate with their children and go to a refuge, a risk assessment could be done and they could stay in their homes. The kids could keep going to school and people could keep going to work, if they were working. They could stay connected with their families and networks. The perpetrators had to move out. It was a really positive intervention. Members may have seen in *The West Australian* today a woman called Crystal, who was brave enough and good enough to come forward and be part of a photo with Anne Moore from the Women's Council Domestic and Family Violence Services to talk about her experience and say that she benefited. It is fantastic that five years after she experienced significant domestic violence from her partner—her partner was jailed and it was pretty horrendous to hear what she had been through—she and her three children are doing really well. That is a practical outcome of this program, but at the end of this month the federal government funding for that program will come to an end. That is not acceptable. We will continue to campaign. The federal government can say that it is against domestic violence and that it is concerned about the safety of women, but it has to match sentiment with resources. It has to put some money on the table. At the end of this month, when those programs come to an end, I have asked my department to make sure that people are not laid off and that we can keep people employed in those programs. I am not interested in propping up the federal government when it is not coming forward with the goods. If we can find extra money, I want that to be in addition to what we are doing now. We will continue to campaign and say that women should be kept safe in their homes and the state government has an important role to play to make sure that occurs.