

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — SUPPORT SERVICES

773. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to a 2015 national study, which estimated that violence against women costs the Australian economy more than \$20 billion a year. Can the minister advise the house how the McGowan Labor government is supporting those in the WA community who have experienced or are experiencing family and domestic violence?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am particularly pleased to take this question from the member for Murray-Wellington. At lunchtime I had the pleasure of being with the member as she met with a breast cancer survivor and her daughter. The member recently won a prize at a fundraiser for a return trip to Paris, which she was very excited about, but yesterday she came and said to me that she had made a decision to give that trip to Paris to the breast cancer survivor who had been speaking at a function.

[Applause.]

Ms S.F. McGURK: That is very generous of the member, so I am very pleased to take a question from her.

We are in the middle of 16 Days in WA, which is an awareness-raising campaign to highlight the reason that we need to redouble our efforts to prevent family and domestic violence. As the member said, the financial cost to the Australian economy of women experiencing physical, sexual and emotional abuse was estimated by PricewaterhouseCoopers to be more than \$20 billion. Of course, who bears the majority of this cost? Is it the federal government or state and territory governments? No. Is it employers or perpetrators? No. The study by PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that it is the victims of family and domestic violence who bear the brunt of this cost of more than \$20 billion. That is just the financial cost. There are also emotional and physical costs. Children in out-of-home care are overrepresented in these statistics. Just over 90 per cent of children in out-of-home care have either personally experienced or witnessed domestic violence in their home. We need to do better. It is not just the financial cost. The physical, emotional and developmental costs are all reasons that we need to stop family and domestic violence.

The state government, through the Department of Communities, provides funding of more than \$7 million to services throughout the state, such as women's refuges, family and domestic violence counselling, and advocacy and support services. I would like to improve that contribution, but because of the state of the budget left to us by the other side, that is difficult. We do what we can. I will be very pleased to attend an event with the member for Mandurah tomorrow to commit more than \$1 million over four years to family and domestic violence counselling in the Peel region. We will be there tomorrow to talk about the need to support those services. We are backing up our support for them not only by visiting them and understanding the work they do, but also through financial support. I thank the member for Mandurah for his advocacy for services in his region. Part of the campaign that we are running is not just to highlight the need for a better response, but also to try to prevent family and domestic violence. We need to understand that we all have a role to play in our families, our communities and the organisations in which we participate to say that this violence has to stop. We need to give women and children who experience this violence some hope for the future.