

METHAMPHETAMINE ACTION PLAN TASKFORCE — MONITORED CHILDREN

**460. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:**

What impact will the Minister for Police's decision to close down the Methamphetamine Action Plan Taskforce have on the number of monitored children at risk from methamphetamine, given that we have already seen a tripling of the number of monitored children in the south west under her watch?

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

It is as if questions from the opposition were prepared before question time and members from the other side have no capacity to adjust their questions depending on what information has come to light. For instance, the first question in question time came from the member for Hillarys, who asked about the abolition of the meth action task force. I heard an interview on 6PR this morning that clearly and unequivocally refuted that.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Hillarys! Calm him down, member for South Perth.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Then the Minister for Police did exactly the same in answer to that first question. Nevertheless, the member for Vasse got up and asked what impact will the police's actions on a so-called reduction in resources dedicated to combatting methamphetamine have on domestic violence and child protection. Let us get one thing clear: there is no reduction in effort by the WA Police Force to combat methamphetamine abuse or use; it is quite the opposite. There are additional resources, and the Minister for Police made that crystal clear to the member. If she needs more proof, she should go back and listen to the audio from Gareth Parker this morning. The acting commissioner was very clear about what additional resources have been put in place to combat methamphetamine and other drug use in our community.

With regard to how we are combatting domestic violence, I am quite happy to make clear to this house what we are doing as a government. We took a range of commitments to the March 2017 election and we are meeting those commitments. We have put \$53 million of new money into combatting domestic violence in this state. This is a significant investment around keeping women safe, holding perpetrators to account, having our justice system responsive and making sure that we are sending a clear and unequivocal message to our Western Australian community that violence in any form is not acceptable. It is certainly not acceptable to women and children. Last week during question time, we announced the opening of the second Breathing Space, the perpetrator residential program.

The member also asked about the number of monitored children under the child protection system in the south west. Again, it has been explained to her numerous times in answers to questions and during budget estimates hearings that the number of children monitored in child protection means the number of children in the care of the department who are settled, who are with carers, who are doing well and who do not need active case management. That is a good thing in child protection terms. I can explain it to the member again. It is a good thing that they are settled, that they are with carers, that they are doing well and that they are attending school.

We acknowledged that a range of issues have come up and a number of incidents of harm reported and verified in child protection cases in the south west. We acknowledged that in the estimates process, and I am happy to verify those figures or to give the member those figures again. We have also put extra resources into the south west region to accommodate that. There are peaks and troughs with child protection cases at various times throughout the state. The system that we have throughout the state makes sure that we allocate staff to those district offices to meet that demand. I repeat that it is a good thing that there are more monitored cases in the member's region because it means that those children are settled and are doing well in their placements.