

GRANDCARERS SUPPORT SCHEME

399. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the minister's backflip to reinstate the \$125 000 for the grandcarers respite scheme last year, made after her government initially cut the funding. Has that funding, which provides enormous relief and support to grandcarers, been renewed in this budget; and, if not, will the minister backflip again to provide this much-needed support?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

It is interesting to hear the language that has been used by the member for Darling Range, because when the Liberal Party is in office and it has funding for a finite period of time—two or three years—it says the funding has been cut when that particular program comes to an end. That was the case with the grandcarers support scheme. There was a program of funding that went for two or three years, and that came to an end.

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range! You have asked a question. Wait for the answer.

Ms S.F. McGURK: However, I understand that grandcarers around the state do an amazing job. There are a number of self-funded support groups. Some of them get some external assistance from Wanslea. Those grandcarers do it really tough. I understand that. I have met with them. I have a lot of sympathy for the work that they do, being of mature age themselves, and dealing with often very difficult circumstances with their own children and then having to take on the care of their grandchildren.

When the funding came to an end, even though it had originally been in place for a finite period of time, that caused some angst, and we agreed to reinstate it. That question has been asked of me. There is not a separate line item in the budget, but I have asked the department to look at whether we can continue the funding for the grandcarer support scheme. I know it is an ongoing issue around the country. Some issues were raised with the federal government and both major parties to see what social security support could be given to grandcarers. Of course there are different types of grandcarers. Some grandcarers are under the formal child protection system, and, once that is in place, those people are given some more formal assistance, but the vast majority of grandcarers have this arrangement because of their own internal family arrangements, and so the financial supports are limited, and I understand the frustration with that.

To answer the member's question, I have asked the department to see whether we can continue with the \$125 000 support through Wanslea.