

FAMILY VIOLENCE

808. Mr MURRAY to the Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth:

Will the minister outline what new initiatives are in place to address family violence in Western Australia?

Ms McHALE replied:

I thank the member for his question. As a country member, he is very concerned to ensure that services for the victims of domestic violence and children who witness domestic violence are provided in regional Western Australia.

There is absolutely no doubt that domestic violence has tragic human costs. This State Government recognises the importance of personal safety for women and their families. In response to an ever-increasing community concern about family violence, this Government has recently announced some significant new services with new funding as part of the State Government's overall strategy to enhance existing services and ultimately to reduce domestic violence. Some of the services include the new multicultural domestic violence and support service, which is provided by Women's Health Care House. This was launched just over a week ago. This will enable culturally and linguistically diverse women to have access to the new service via four metropolitan locations, an outreach service and a telephone support service for women in country Western Australia. We have allocated an additional \$100 000 per annum to provide counselling support services for Aboriginal children who witness family violence in their home and in the community. In total, nearly \$500 000 funds a total of five services specifically targeting children in both the metropolitan and country regions. We are also significantly increasing the funding to regional domestic violence committees, the lion's share of which, the member will be pleased to know, will go to regional and remote domestic violence committees. We have set up a new committee in the Peel region. To support the overall coordination of women's refuges, the Women's Refuge Group of Western Australia has received significant funding in the form of an extra \$50 000 to recognise the strategic role that the group plays in coordinating responses to domestic violence.

There is no doubt that there is a growing awareness throughout the community that domestic violence is simply not acceptable. It is not something that we should tolerate in our community. It is a scourge on our community. The services that I have recently announced and others reflect this State Government's commitment to providing the framework for a safe and secure community.