

MARNINWARNTIKURA WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE — FITZROY CROSSING

198. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Mental Health:

I ask my question on behalf of the member for Kimberley who is not able to be in the chamber at this time. I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to improving social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal people in Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the progress to improve mental health services for young people in regional communities such as those in Fitzroy Valley?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how the delivery of health services in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations allows for better connections with Aboriginal culture?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Kingsley for her question on behalf of the member for Kimberley. I want to acknowledge the member for Kimberley's advocacy and connection to her community. In particular, we went last year to visit Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy and met with people there. It is an organisation that is highly regarded and has been led by successive strong female leaders, including June Oscar and Emily Carter, the current chief executive. They are a strong and powerful voice for women, certainly in Fitzroy. The work they are doing at the moment includes partnering with the University of Sydney to conduct groundbreaking research into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and the impact of intergenerational trauma through the Lililwan Project and the follow-up Bigiswun project.

We know that a high proportion of young people in Fitzroy have experienced trauma in their early lives, and they also live with neurodevelopmental disabilities. We understand the lack of assessment and services that are available in those remote communities. As a result, too many young people in the community have symptoms of anxiety and depression and suicidal ideation. They have simply not been able to move out of those symptoms and achieve their goals. We heard loud and clear from Emily herself that young people in Fitzroy want access close to where they live to improved services that are culturally safe, including mental health, emotional and social wellbeing support. We also heard that in order for this to be successful, it has to be driven by the community for the local community. That is why I am pleased to say that Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre has received \$835 000 to deliver more services to young Aboriginal people. Informed by Aboriginal people and extensive research conducted in partnership with the community, this model is new and it will provide opportunities for cultural connection and create an environment that enables young people living in Fitzroy to heal, be healthy and be supported to achieve their goals.

The pilot will bring a combination of cultural and clinical expertise in the facilitation of referrals. MWRC has a clinical neuropsychologist onsite and it will provide a culturally safe and place-based assessment of cognitive disorders. These are practical supports to assist young people to navigate the cultural, systemic and language barriers that prevent them from accessing broader government and health services. These are critical to providing positive functioning and wellbeing for these young people.

A range of activities in this program are co-led by young people. These activities foster empowerment and provide opportunity and connection with culture to heal on country. Connecting vulnerable people with services that consider the unique cultural, linguistic and geographic context of the Kimberley region serves to protect and promote their social and emotional wellbeing. As the Minister for Mental Health, I am committed to working with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal-controlled organisations to co-design and support services that are led and delivered by them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Central Wheatbelt with the last question.