

TARGET 120 SITES

692. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to supporting at-risk youth and improving community safety through the Target 120 program. Can the minister update the house on the expansion of this program, which was backed by an \$11.1 million investment in this year's state budget, and can the minister inform the house how this program is delivering positive outcomes in local communities?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I thank the member for her question and her advocacy for young people in her electorate. Before I begin, I thought there was a frog where the member for Warren–Blackwood was sitting yesterday, but it appears the frog has moved to the member for Kingsley's spot. Time for a break, I think. Lots of people are getting a bit sick.

I thank the member for the opportunity to update the house on Target 120. We know it is a really important program that is making a significant difference to young people's lives. It is an important initiative of the Cook government, and it is paying great results where we have located the Target 120 program right around the state. We know it is a difficult job working with young people who have complex needs and trying to divert them from the justice system and supporting them in turning their lives around. It is complex work but it has a significant impact. Work that steers young people from a life of offending is something worth doing, and this Target 120 program is doing that every day with people working with young people right around the state. We committed in 2018 to rolling out Target 120 in 11 sites with an initial investment of \$20.4 million. The initial sites were Bunbury, Armadale, Kalgoorlie, Kununurra, Northam, Albany, Port Hedland, Mirrabooka, Geraldton, Rockingham and Midland. As the member has mentioned, last year we made a further investment of \$11.1 million to expand the program into nine other locations, including Broome, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby, Karratha, Newman, Carnarvon, Mandurah and Ellenbrook. In this year's budget, importantly, we continued to back it by making sure the investment in those 20 sites is locked in until June 2025. This shows our commitment to the important work happening right around our state with young people one person at a time.

Of those 20 locations, 18 are operational, and work continues with the remaining two communities to support engaging Aboriginal-controlled organisations and recruiting staff to operate in those two locations. It is important that we get the right service provider because we know the service provider has to have the trust of the young people they are working with. The best way to get that trust is by engaging local people to participate in this program. Recent data shows that 133 young people are actively involved in the program right now. Of course, that changes from day to day. It is important to realise that it includes not only those 133 young people, but also the 498 family members it is critical to support as part of the Target 120 program.

Since the inception of Target 120, 335 young people and over 1 300 family members have participated. It is early days. It is difficult. It is complex and demanding work, but we are seeing some really good outcomes. Of the young people involved in the Target 120 program, we are seeing a reduction in reoffending by nearly half. For those who reoffend, their offending overwhelmingly involves less severe offences. Of course, other indicators of success are that young people are engaging with other areas in the community, be it re-engaging in education or participating in the other services or sporting and youth programs in towns around the state. We should not for one moment presume that what we are doing with Target 120 is easy and will solve the complex issues of our youth around the state overnight. It is complex and difficult work. It is one step at a time to change one young person's life at a time. We know that it makes a difference in turning around those young people's lives. It supports their families, and, importantly, it supports keeping communities around the state safe. The Cook government is continuing to back this program. As we know, it is an investment of \$43 million in early intervention and supporting young people to turn their lives around.

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