

POLICE AND COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTRES

557. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Police:

I will refer to the minister's mean approach to funding Police and Community Youth Centres.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that, under new arrangements, PCYCs will now be required to raise the cost of the salary of their managers themselves?
- (2) How much will each PCYC have to raise?
- (3) Can the minister guarantee today that no PCYCs across the state will close as a result of this mean new arrangement?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

- (1)–(3) That is a very interesting question and, obviously, the member who asked the question does not actually know how PCYCs are run and the funding that goes with PCYCs. PCYC is an incorporated association. It is autonomous and it is not run by the police service of Western Australia. It is very much supported by them, and, in fact, the Commissioner of Police —

Mr E.S. Ripper: It was supported by them, perhaps.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, no, the police will still support them, I can assure you—the same as this government will. The Commissioner of Police is actually the chairman of the PCYC.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Is he staying in that role?

Ms M.M. Quirk: He's resigned, hasn't he?

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, I think he is the chairman.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Is he staying in that role?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: There is some talk about whether he will. He feels that he may have a conflict of interest—to answer the interjection. I do not think that has taken place yet. I think he has done a very good job as chairman of the police and citizens youth centres up to now and has always shown a commitment to the PCYC organisation. The organisation, as I understand it, has a fair amount in assets—quite a few million dollars—that it can use to expand PCYCs. This government supports the expansion of PCYCs.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You're going to close them, not expand them.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We are looking to ensure, if we can through the PCYC organisation, the establishment of new PCYCs in areas where they are needed. Some are needed in the northern suburbs. In and around Clarkson, I would suggest, is a great area for a new PCYC. There are other areas of the state where we believe a PCYC would be of great benefit. Part of our intention is to work with both the Commissioner of Police and the Director General of the Department of Education, who meet regularly, to see how we can best fulfil a commitment to ensure that there is much more of a police presence in different schools. There is, therefore, a link between PCYCs in schools where there are problems. We have had some success stories. In Gosnells —

Mr E.S. Ripper: That's a broken promise.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, it is not.

Gosnells is a classic case. Two children in one particular family there were having enormous problems not only at school, but also in society, where they were committing crime after crime. Since the PCYC has got involved with them through the school and all the rest of it, it has put on programs to try to keep those children out of trouble. The PCYC played a very important role in the forum we held recently in Joondalup, and the mother of those children was prepared to come forward and talk about the success that the PCYC and some officers in Gosnells had with her two children. The children had not committed offences in the previous nine months and have actually started to get some basic education. Very often the problem with young children who get into that cycle is that they do not go to school; they are truant. They do not learn to read and write, and it is very difficult for them when they are put back into a school environment after a couple of years of not attending school. The PCYC in Gosnells, in particular, has played a very important role indeed in rehabilitating and educating those children to a certain standard, and the mother is very grateful for that input.

The PCYC organisation is an area in which we want to see expansion. As I have said, we want to see it throughout the state, and we will continue to do that. Fair enough; we have been in government for two years, but we have seen a huge reduction in crime. Another one of our commitments is to try to increase the involvement of school-based police officers, but in the form of links with the local PCYC, because we believe that is the best way to go. Certainly, police officers will visit those schools on certain days, and we will be spreading out those links. That is being worked through at the moment between the Commissioner of Police and the Director General of the Department of Education. The Minister for Education and I meet regularly to discuss this matter.

Mr M. McGowan: That's not the question.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The question was based on the premise that running PCYCs is a state government responsibility. It is not the state government's responsibility. PCYCs are autonomous. We will always help PCYCs in every way we can.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Certainly, one of the areas with which we will be doing that is the Office of Crime Prevention.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We will endeavour to help fund those PCYCs that are in a shortfall situation.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You're cutting the money, minister.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: We are not cutting the money; do not be stupid! I think we are doing quite a good job.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The PCYC organisation was left to wane under the previous government, like very many areas. Since we came to government, we have taken it seriously and we have a commitment to PCYCs.