

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

**2020–21 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND
2019–20 ANNUAL REPORTS**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2020**

**SESSION FOUR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES — FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Members
Hon Alanna Clohesy (Chair)
Hon Tjorn Sibma (Deputy Chair)
Hon Diane Evers
Hon Aaron Stonehouse
Hon Colin Tincknell

Hearing commenced at 3.16 pm

Hon SUE ELLERY

Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection, examined:

Ms MICHELLE ANDREWS

Director General, examined:

Mrs RACHAEL GREEN

Acting Deputy Director General, examined:

Mr MICHAEL CREVOLA

Chief Finance Officer, examined:

Mr NILUSHKA WIJAYADASA

Interim Chief Finance Officer, examined:

Mr MATTHEW RICHARDSON

Director, Management, Accounting and Financial Analysis, examined:

Mr GLENN MACE

Executive Director, Statewide Services, examined:

The CHAIR: Good afternoon. This is the hearing with the Department of Communities; Family and Domestic Violence. On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. I will now swear in the witnesses.

Please state whether you have read, understood and signed a document titled "Information for Witnesses".

The WITNESSES: Yes.

The CHAIR: It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. It is also being broadcast live on Parliament's website. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private. If, for some reason, you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Members, before asking your question, I ask that you identify whether it relates to the budget papers or annual report and provide the relevant page number.

Minister, do you have a brief opening statement?

Hon SUE ELLERY: No, thanks, Chair.

The CHAIR: From an indication of those members who wish to ask questions, it looks like we have about 30 minutes for Hon Nick Goiran and 30 minutes for Hon Alison Xamon, and the rest spread relatively across the remaining participating members. Let us commence with Hon Nick Goiran.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, the Department of Communities' annual report has been signed by the director general and dated 9 October 2020. At page 80 of the annual report it states that the one-stop hubs are on track to open in November 2020. As I say, this document was signed and dated 9 October 2020 and it says that the one-stop hubs are on track to open in November 2020. Putting aside the fact that we are now in November 2020, interestingly, in answers provided prior to today's hearing, it has been revealed that the service delivery will commence in December 2020. Does that remain the case as at today?

[3.20 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will check. Yes. The answers that you were given about that referred to December 2020. Yes, that is the expected date. Although the annual report was signed off on the date that you referred to in October, you would appreciate, honourable member, that the content of annual reports is prepared slightly in advance of that.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes, absolutely. I just thought it was interesting, given how many times I have asked questions about one-stop hubs during this term of Parliament and the date has been pushed out and out. Even between the annual report and the answering of questions, there is another month delay. That said, how will the department communicate to the people who will use the hub that it is actually open?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am told that the department is working with the minister on a communications plan, so that would be around notifying relevant service providers who might deal with people who might be the ones wanting to use the one-stop hub. That coms plan has not been finalised yet.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Are those service providers the City of Stirling and Hope Community Services?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It will be broader than the local governments, although local governments are considered to be key stakeholders, but it would be the peak organisations and a whole range of relevant service providers.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Sorry, I misunderstood. I thought that the communications plan was being developed with service providers.

Hon SUE ELLERY: No, I said that the agency is working with the minister's office on a communications plan.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: There was no reference to service providers being involved in the input of that communications plan?

The CHAIR: Perhaps I can provide some enlightenment. I think the minister said the "agency", as distinct from the "agencies".

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I must have misheard. That is fine. With respect to the communications plan, when is it expected to be completed?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I think they are working on it now, so the matter is live now.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is it expected to be completed before —

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have that information, but we are in November now and the opening is planned for December, so I am told that those discussions are happening now.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: So it is reasonable to assume that it will be ready by 30 November.

Hon SUE ELLERY: That would be reasonable.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Minister, the minister you represent issued a media release on 30 October this year stating that the service providers were signed up. On what date were the City of Stirling and Hope Community Services signed up? This is again in respect to the one-stop community hubs.

Hon SUE ELLERY: No, I cannot tell you the date that they were signed up. I could take that as a supplementary if that is helpful to the member.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes, it would be, because since the minister made the release on 30 October, one would hope that the date they were signed up was before that date.

[Supplementary Information No D1.]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: What confidence does the director general have that there is sufficient time at an operational level for these two organisations to be ready to effectively deliver the services that are due to commence in December 2020?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will get the director general to answer that.

Ms ANDREWS: I am very confident about it. This project has had really good governance and communication and engagement built around it, so I am very confident that when we move to the next phase, all the key parties are ready to play their role.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: What services will these two organisations provide?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have that information available, but I would be happy to take it as a supplementary.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Okay, but I will make this observation: page 80 of the annual report talks about one-stop hubs and them being ready to commence in December 2020. It seems strange that there are no notes available for today about the one-stop hubs, which was a major election commitment. But if there is nothing available today, I would be grateful if it could be taken on notice.

[Supplementary Information No D2.]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: To the extent that you can answer this question, minister, is there information available today as to how the efficacy of the one-stop hubs will be measured?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I can answer that, honourable member. I am told that Communities is currently running a procurement process to engage somebody to do the monitoring and evaluation framework with the selected service providers to ensure that the service outcomes can be evaluated effectively, and it is expected that that same consultant will also undertake the final evaluation in 2022, which would be used then to support and design future funding bids.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is it expected that the procurement process will be completed before the commencement of service delivery?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I cannot say for sure that it will be.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Are we able to advise the committee as to how far the procurement process is underway?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am happy to assist the committee in any way I can, but there are no officers here from the contracting part of the agency. What I can do, honourable member, with the assistance of technology, is that I will see if they can check with someone, and if we can give you a time line on exactly where the procurement process is at for the consultant to do the evaluation and monitoring, I will let you know before the end of the session. If not, I will take it as a supplementary.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Madam Chair, perhaps we could take it as a supplementary in the interim so that we do not forget.

The CHAIR: Correct. We will add that—D3. If the information comes in, we will withdraw that when the information is provided.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: To be clear, that is the status of the procurement process and whether it will be completed before service delivery commences. There are two parts to that question.

[Supplementary Information No D3.]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Moving on, with respect to family and domestic violence more generally, in my discussions with stakeholders, the issue that has been reported most frequently by them pertains to partner visa issues and women with vulnerable visas. This particular issue is not mentioned in the annual report, it is not mentioned in the budget and it is not mentioned in the “First Action Plan 2020–2022”. It does receive a very brief mention in the “Path to Safety: Western Australia’s Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020–2030”. Can the minister outline what the department is doing to address this major issue for victims of domestic violence and the service providers who are trying to help them?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure. Although I appreciate it is an area of particular interest to the honourable member and has been raised with him by the stakeholders and is indeed a serious issue, the fact that it is not mentioned in these papers means that the agency has not come here prepared to answer that question, but I am going to see if someone can provide us with some information about that.

[3.30 pm]

Honourable member, just noting that a note has not been prepared on that because the issue is not specifically identified within the documents that we are looking at today; however, I am advised that the department does fund a whole range of multicultural communities to assist them in how they service members of their communities. While there is not a separate stream of work around that visa issue that you referred to, it is part of the work that is captured and funded in the grants that are made available to multicultural groups to deal with family and domestic violence.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Minister, you mentioned that the department funds a whole range of these multicultural groups. How many such groups are funded and is there a list that can be provided to the committee?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I can give you some information about that. As part of the “Path to Safety: Western Australia’s strategy to reduce family and domestic violence”, Ishar Multicultural Women’s Health Services was one of the successful recipients of the grants. They have been funded \$800 000 over four years to deliver the statewide program free from family and domestic violence. That program delivers cultural competency training for family and domestic violence service providers, building capacity within targeted multicultural communities and organisations. Since commencing the project, Ishar has delivered a number of community education sessions targeting the Congolese, Syrian, Nepalese and the Naari Indian community. Those workshops have had about 170 participants. Sector training on cultural appropriateness and awareness has been delivered to 58 service providers. The rest of the information in that note is about services to Aboriginal associations. That is the information in respect to multicultural.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Further to that, the minister referred to —

The Ishar Multicultural Women’s Health Centre is delivering a state-wide Free from Family and Domestic Violence program to provide cultural competence training for family and domestic violence service providers.

That is referenced at page 79 of the annual report. It does not seem to have any direct relevance to this issue of partner visa issues. Specifically, as I understand it, this \$800 000 of funding that you referred to is to ask this organisation to provide cultural competency training. Cultural competency training would seem to be a distinct issue to tackling partner visa issues.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Honourable member, the funding is for two things: it is for them to provide community education for the named multicultural communities. That is not teaching them cultural competency; that is assisting them to deal with family and domestic violence within their communities. And captured within that is the issue that you raised, which is a live issue in many of those communities. There is not a specifically isolated stream of work, if you like, or stream of funding specific to that issue, but that issue is a real one. That is why, in part, funding is provided to Ishar to assist those communities to deal with family and domestic violence, and one of the issues those communities have to deal with is the visa issue.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Considering the vast numbers of different types of cultures represented in Western Australia, is the decision on which cultural competency to cover based on evidence; and, if so, what is that evidence?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The cultural appropriateness—just so we make sure we are talking about the same thing—is for those 58 service providers, which I assume—I am going to check—are the women’s refuges, for example. I am advised that that cultural appropriateness training has been delivered to 58 service providers. That includes women’s refuges, but it also includes a range of outreach services. I think the specifics of your question was: how do they determine what area of cultural competency they are going to focus on and is that based on some evidence. I will try to get an answer to that.

I am advised that the cultural competency is not about specific cultures; it is about how to work with different cultures to be able to provide the most effective service and make sure that your services are able to be accessed by different multicultural groups.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: How is the success of that program being measured?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have any information about whether a specific evaluation is being done. I am advised that one of the measures of success is the number of participants, but perhaps if there was more than that—because that may or may not be a measure of success—I am happy to take that as supplementary and see if I can provide the member with some additional information.

[Supplementary Information No D4.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: While we are at it, I am advised via the wonders of the worldwide web—the internet—that regarding the procurement of one-stop hubs, a decision has been made to award the contracts. I cannot announce them here and now, but there will be an announcement soon, honourable member.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Given that there are two one-stop hubs, one would assume that if it is plural, that is because there will be two agencies or two consultants involved. That said, minister, has the director general had any conversation with her counterpart in the Department of Justice with respect to tackling this issue of partner visa issues and women with vulnerable visas?

[3.40 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised, no.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Minister, I refer to page 27 of the annual report and in particular to the reference to the family and domestic violence central triage model. How long has the centralised family violence assessment team at Royal Street been operating?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised from 28 April.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Reference has been made to data relating to the Kimberley region. Is there also any data from the metropolitan region?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised that, yes, we have information about other areas, other than the Kimberley.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Okay. With respect to the Kimberley region, you will see there at page 27 that the region was supported for two months between 30 April and 30 June. Is that an indication that the support has now ceased, since 30 June?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, it ceased on 30 June, honourable member.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: What is the justification for it ceasing, given its importance?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will ask Mrs Green to provide you with an answer.

Mrs GREEN: Thank you, minister. Thank you, member, for your question. It was particularly during COVID-19 with demands on the local Kimberley team, but we were also responding to travel restrictions and other demands on the service. The central triage team actually exists in metro—the state referral and response service. They offer to provide teams across the state, in our regional areas, with a level of support to be able to triage and do the assessments. In actual fact, there was a central team with our WAPOL colleagues that actually received the FDV incident reports and triaged them and then, on the basis of that, referred it back to the Kimberley to be able to go and take the action.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes. That explains what was done between 30 April and 30 June.

Mrs GREEN: So before 30 April and after 30 June, in actual fact that activity takes place within the Kimberley region in the child protection district office.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Right, so it was only just in those two months that it was centralised. Otherwise, it is ordinarily decentralised?

Mrs GREEN: Across the country regions, yes, but the metro triage response provides an ongoing service to metro, and has existed for a period of time.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: On page 27, there is this curious phrase “five joint-agency perpetrator behaviour mappings”. Is someone in a position to explain what that means?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Where are you looking, honourable member?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Page 27 of the annual report. It is the seventh line down.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I see: “facilitated five joint-agency perpetrator behaviour mappings”. I would say that is jargon, myself, but let us see if we can get an explanation.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If someone could translate, that would be excellent.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will ask Mr Mace to provide you with an answer.

Mr MACE: As this was a pilot project in anticipation of some changing demands in the region, this was really an opportunity for the team on the ground to collaborate, work together and learn from unpacking and understanding the intelligence that had been gathered centrally through the central triage, and to discuss what was going to be the best approach to manage that on the ground in the Kimberley. They used those cases as working case studies to learn and understand how they were best going to respond.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Okay. I take it, then, that there were five agencies involved in this mapping process. If that is the case, can you advise who the five agencies were?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I think the explanation is five cases. There were joint agencies; they looked at five cases.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Okay. That makes much more sense. The joint agencies were otherwise the three mentioned—Communities, Western Australia Police Force and the Department of Justice?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Correct.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Okay, thanks. I move then, minister, to the budget papers, and in particular to page 519 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, which states that \$2.6 million will be spent on extending the Kimberley family violence service trial by two years. I can compare this with the answers provided to questions prior to today's hearing, which state —

The new KFVS will remain a trial as it will differ significantly from the previous KFVS.

My question is: how are they different?

The CHAIR: While you are waiting, honourable member, we will make this your next-to-last question, as in this is your five-minute warning.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am just trying to get you some detail, honourable member, on what will be done differently in the extension of the trial. That is what I am trying to track down.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: In the interests of saving time, I would be happy for it to be taken on notice.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, we might have to.

[Supplementary Information No D5.]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I believe I have one last question. Minister, I refer to page 26 of the annual report, which states —

... the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline received a 47 per cent increase in calls in March 2020 compared to March 2019.

Has this high trend continued; and, if so, has the helpline been resourced adequately and has it received an increase in funding to meet the demand?

[3.50 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised that it is currently resourced adequately for what it is getting. There was a peak in the number of calls at around the 900 mark. It is down in the 700s now—that is as at October 2020—so it is trending back down. No additional funding was provided—I am not sure whether any was sought—and they managed those within existing resources.

The CHAIR: Member, before we move on, we still had the question of status of the procurement, and so the minister provided you with an update on the status of the procurement. Do you want me to hold to that? I dare not ask whether you are satisfied with the answer.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I was satisfied because the explanation was that contracts had been awarded and presumably an announcement is imminent. It was a two-part question, so the other part should remain.

The CHAIR: We will leave the whole lot on and see what comes back.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Just following on from the previous question that Hon Nick Goiran asked, I understand that you said the calls are trending down, but how do the October numbers compare with October last year?

Hon SUE ELLERY: In October 2020 we are at 780; in October 2019 we were at 622.

Hon ALISON XAMON: So still higher than the previous year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, but it went up into the 900s.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Just going back to the issue of the establishment of the one-stop hubs, which is in the annual report, page 80, how much funding has been allocated to the hubs for this year and also in the forward estimates?

Hon SUE ELLERY: We are just tracking the year by year. It is \$15.9 million across 2021 to 2023–24. I am just getting that broken down year by year for you. While we are doing that, shall we move along so you do not run out of time?

Hon ALISON XAMON: That would be wonderful, thank you. Also in the annual report, page 79, under key achievements—the commenced referrals to the Breathing Space Maylands facility. When did the facility begin operation and what is its capacity?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The first Breathing Space in Maylands came into effect on 1 July 2019 and accepted referrals from 8 July 2019. The second Breathing Space commenced on 1 July 2020, and it commenced operations then. Your second question was about capacity. I am just seeing whether I have that.

Hon ALISON XAMON: As part of capacity, I am also wanting to get an idea as to whether there are already waiting lists to be able to access it.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am happy to take that as supplementary. We do not have that information here.
[Supplementary Information No D6.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Minister, how are people referred to the Breathing Space? Is there any capacity for self-referral?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not think I can answer it, so I will take it as supplementary.
[Supplementary Information No D7.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: I will persevere to get some more information about the Breathing Space. I am after some more information on the program itself. I want to get an idea of how long people usually stay in the program, what supports are being delivered and who is currently providing those services.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Communicare is providing the service, but we will take the rest of that as supplementary.
[Supplementary Information No D8.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Before you go to your next question, in respect of the question about the hubs budget for 2020–21, it is \$4.2 million.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Going back to the hubs question, I was also after the forward estimates for the hubs.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I gave you that period.

Hon ALISON XAMON: You gave it for the whole time. Just average it out—is that what you are suggesting?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I have already given you the first figure. The figure for 2021–22 is \$3.3 million, the following year it is \$3.7 million and the following year it is \$3.6 million.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Why has it gone down in the following year? Why is it anticipated that there will be less?

Hon SUE ELLERY: It is the start-up cost early on.

Hon ALISON XAMON: My final question is about Breathing Space. I presume I had to take this on notice. How many people have been through the Breathing Space programs now? Is there information on the outcomes and how that has been collated?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not have the information here, but we can incorporate that into the hubs supplementary information.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Do you need to assign a number to that?

The CHAIR: We have already given it a status and we have also noted that we will incorporate that into the hubs one, which was D8.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I refer to the budget papers, page 523, and the line item on preventing family and domestic violence under the service summary. Has any money been allocated towards research; and, if yes, how much and what specific issues are being researched?

[4.00 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not think I can answer that here, and frankly I am less concerned about that, because that is not a reference in the budget papers to research. I do not think it is unreasonable that there is no note if there is not a reference to it, but I am happy to take it as supplementary.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you, minister. As part of that supplementary then, I am also wanting to know: if any research is being funded and undertaken, who is doing it? And I also wanted to know whether there was any research being undertaken into the issue of coercive control?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure.

[*Supplementary Information No D9.*]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Again, referring to budget page 523 “Service Summary”, “Preventing and Responding to FDV”, has any funding been provided for targeted support or counselling for children and young people who have experienced family and domestic violence, specifically, for children and young people?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I know from my own experience as the minister that there are a range of programs for children and young people that are run by service providers. I will get obviously what information I have available.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Particularly, I was after the targeted programs.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. I know that they exist, for example I know that the women’s refuges operating in the northern suburbs run them.

Hon ALISON XAMON: What I was wanting to do, minister, is get the detail around that. I was wanting to know how much has been allocated and who is providing the services and where those services are provided. Because obviously the detail is not in the budget papers, I am keen to get that detail.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will just have a quick look to see whether there is any information we can provide you now, but that level of, I am loathed to say, program specificity —

Hon ALISON XAMON: Programmatic specificity.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes—it would not be recorded here. But I know there are services that provide that. We will take that as a supplementary.

[*Supplementary Information No D10.*]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Again, referring to budget page 523, “Services Summary: Preventing and Responding to FDV”, how much of the \$76 million is going to prevention activities rather than responses to FDV? I was hoping to also receive a breakdown of that funding.

Hon SUE ELLERY: We do not have the information here on what the split is, and I would not expect to see that in here. I am happy to provide that to you as a supplementary.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I just want to be clear, you do not have any of the detail, even a percentage, that is going towards prevention activities?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised not.

[Supplementary Information No D11.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Again, referring to the same line item, has any funding been allocated specifically to respond to family and domestic violence in LGBTIQ communities? If so, how much, and who is that going to to deliver those services?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Honourable member, there is no information available to me here as to whether there is any specific allocation to services providing support specifically to the LGBTIQ community. However, I think it is a good idea to take it as supplementary, because I am sure that there are LGBTIQ community members who access services. I will double-check to see if there is a stream of funding that is specific and see what other information we can provide for you.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you. Minister, I am aware that those specific services have been funded in the past, so I am keen to get an idea of whether they are still being funded and who is delivering that. I know that they target the community in very different way.

[Supplementary Information No D12.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: I refer to the annual report, page 81, and Pets in Crisis, and note that \$100 000 was allocated to the RSPCA in 2019–20. Can I just confirm whether those moneys are ongoing; and, if so, how much, and is it still allocated into the forward estimates?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes, there is additional funding being allocated over four years to the Pets in Crisis program through to 30 June 2023. I am trying to see the money—\$415 000 over the period 2019–20 to 2022–23. There are some more stats, if that is helpful.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I notice that it works on a referral basis. Is there any information to advise whether the \$100 000 covers those costs, or are the RSPCA effectively meeting any additional need through their own charitable contributions?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I would not have that information here. I think that would probably be best addressed to the RSPCA as to whether or not they have additional demand that they feel they have to meet.

Hon ALISON XAMON: I thought that maybe the department might be aware of whether there is additional demand that is not being met.

Hon SUE ELLERY: It is not in the information that is available to me. I will give you some sense of the numbers though. In 2019–20, 29 families were supported and 44 animals were accepted into the program.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Clearly that met the need, because it says here that the RSPCA is meeting the need. My issue is whether the amount that has been contributed by the department is covering that cost.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I do not mind taking it as supplementary. If the department has that information, we will provide it.

[Supplementary Information No D13.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Again, going back to the budget, page 523, “Services Summary”. How much funding has been allocated for court-based services for victims of family and domestic violence, including duty officers and other supports?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Honourable member, I am just conscious I do not want to use up your time. I am happy to take it as supplementary, but the director general is of the view that it is probably more likely funded out of Justice rather than the Department of Communities. I will take it as supplementary, but it may well be that the answer is it is done by Justice, not Communities.

[Supplementary Information No D14.]

Hon ALISON XAMON: Minister, in the event that it is partially funded by Communities, I was also wanting to get an idea of who is providing the services and where they are located and how the budget allocations compare to last year’s actual spend. Obviously, if that ultimately is not in the purview of Communities then I will get the information elsewhere.

The CHAIR: That is all included in D14.

[4.10 pm]

Hon ALISON XAMON: I am going to go back to page 523, the service summary of the budget again. What came out of the estimates hearings in the other place was that the family and domestic violence counselling advocacy services, which had been due to end on 30 June, or at least the funding for that, has received the continuing funding that they have been asking for. What I wanted to ask was about the length of those contracts that have been issued, and what is going to be put in place in terms of the ongoing sustainability of those services. Are they going to be subject to review? What is going to be happening with that? Am I going to be coming back every year, trying to advocate?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised that all family and domestic violence counselling, advocacy and support service providers were extended for two years through a contract variation, with an extension option for a further 12 months at the department’s discretion. The budget to extend these services over the three-year period is \$20.1 million. The recovery plan allocated \$1.08 million to the family and domestic violence counselling advocacy and support services for 2020–21 and 2021–22, so that is about \$540 000 a year. Remind me of the second part of your question? Sorry, I can just add: the additional funding provides for an increase in funding for each of the 22 services of approximately nine per cent. Was there another part of your question?

Hon ALISON XAMON: What I was asking, because you said two years additional with a possible 12-month extension beyond that—is there intended to be any review of these programs? What is being put in place to be able to ensure the ongoing sustainability of these programs? Because I am aware that the decision to continue funding came down to the eleventh hour and caused considerable concern for the providers.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am advised, typically, as with all these contracts, they will be evaluated in the final 12 months with a view to seeing what that showed in terms of efficacy in meeting the objectives of the contract.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Can I just confirm: is that 12 months before the two-year expiry, or the 12 months —

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon ALISON XAMON: Thank you. Madam Chair, because I had so many questions on notice, I am done.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: I notice in the budget papers, at page 534, under “Works in progress”, “Election Commitments”, the family and domestic violence refuges, there is only allocation of money for the two financial years, and we are coming close to the end of the second of those financial years. I am just wondering whether we have indeed managed to provide additional refuges under that program, and whether that is complete or still in progress?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sure. We have committed \$53 million of additional funding, including building two new women’s refuges. You are asking about the build?

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: Yes, whether we have completed that program or whether there is still more to be rolled out.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Some of the elements of that \$53 million have already been referred to in earlier answers to others. There are the family violence hubs and the Pets in Crisis. In addition to that, setting up family and domestic violence screening during pregnancy checks, training for police officers, reinstating funding for financial counselling services and establishing another residential men’s behaviour change program known as Breathing Space, which we have touched on already. I am just trying to check from my notes the actual time line of delivery. I will see if I can see that. Construction commenced for both of those refuges in January this year, and they are scheduled for completion and service commitment before the end of the year.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: Thank you; so very close. Can I ask where they are?

Hon SUE ELLERY: We certainly would not give out addresses.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: No; just general regions.

Hon SUE ELLERY: But we could probably say north, south or east. We are saying Kwinana and Peel.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: Thank you.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Minister, I know you are not the direct minister for this, but I have a line of questioning. I suppose, if you are looking for a link to the budget papers, it is all on 519, where we are looking at the path to safety; the Western Australian strategy to reduce family and domestic violence. I suppose, when I look through that, I look at the \$6.7 million going to the FDV response teams; \$8.6 million going to women’s refuges; \$4 million to the Peel and Kwinana refuges; the Kimberley violence service, \$2.6 million; \$1.1 million to counselling advocacy and support services; and then \$100 000 to women’s support. There is a lot of money being spent on domestic violence—an enormous amount—and it is an absolute tragedy in our society. We know that. For the last 20 years, I have worked in prevention. I am wondering, this Western Australian strategy to reduce family and domestic violence is dated 2020 to 2030, so it would have been last year when that was discussed. During all of that, I am wondering, with your wonderful team you have behind you—you mentioned just a minute ago to Hon Martin Pritchard that you have a men’s behavioural change program going on, and I commend you for that. But what I am looking at, when I look right through and I look at the figures, I see also, minister, that for budget target 2020–21, it is going from \$53 million up to \$76 million, so we are expecting more trouble, which is diabolical, but we have COVID on and these are exceptional times. I am getting back to maybe an age-old argument. Minister, we have a Minister for Child Protection, Women’s Interests, Seniors and Ageing, Youth, Aboriginal Affairs, veteran affairs and multicultural affairs. We do not have a minister for men. I am looking at prevention. We are spending so much on fixing up something that has already happened, and I am just wondering whether, if we invested more earlier on, like the men’s behavioural, then maybe we could save ourselves a lot of money, but also the trauma, the family breakdown, the child—we all know that the family law courts get involved in a lot of this, too. I am just wondering,

in the strategy from your team, has the men's issue of having a minister for men or a department for men come up?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: How do they think that could possibly help?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Well, it has come up for thousands of years, honourable member. I guess the answer is, in part, this: the minister is the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence.

[4.20 pm]

She is actually not the minister for prevention of family and domestic violence against women; she is the minister for whomever it is occurring to. We made election commitments about Breathing Space, for example; as such, she has funded programs specifically targeted at men. In addition, if I can use my hat as Minister for Education and Training, she has also led the work on respectful relationships in schools, which is teaching boys and girls how to manage respectful relationships.

The other point that the honourable member makes is quite right, too, which is that it is important to have services in place for crises, but you have got to have the whole spectrum of services in place, so you do need to do that prevention work as well.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I have seen the ads on TV as well, but I just do not think we are doing enough.

Hon SUE ELLERY: You might be right. We can always do more; there is no question about that. I do not know if those people working in the sector would call it the second movement, or maybe it is even the third, but there was a movement in the 1970s to really call this for what it was and start to talk about it. There was a real shift in thinking that started the shift. The member is a similar age to me, so he would recall when police officers did not interfere in "domestics", which is how they referred to it.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: People suffered in silence.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Absolutely. It was basically treated as that is what you signed on to when you agreed to get married. The work of those activists back in the 1970s really started to address that again, and it started to shift thinking. The reason I say that maybe we are on the second or third iteration of activism and, therefore, profile of this issue, was really Rosie Batty's experience when her son, Luke, was killed and the focus that that really put on the issue. People around Australia, indeed probably around the world, looked at that and thought: How can that happen? How can a system so fail that family that that could happen in 2015, or whenever it was? How could that happen? It really refocused energy and thinking and policymaking, and it kind of renewed the focus on that. Out of Luke's death came the royal commission in Victoria, and out of that came a whole range of policies across Australia recognising the very issues that you raise: that we have to have a spectrum of services but we also need to talk about this more, and the more we talk about it, unfortunately, one of the purposes—it is deliberate—of talking about it is so that more families will report it. I know that reporting it for men is very difficult because it goes to the core of who men are to acknowledge that they have been the victim of family violence.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Can I just add to that? Working in that prevention stage, we had that issue in our Aboriginal communities because men were so violent towards the Aboriginal women. They used to pass that off as a bit of culture and all of that. We found out later on that it was not culture; it was alcohol, drugs and so many other things. But we had to engage with those men. We could not just look after and patch up the women; we had to engage those men. In a lot of cases, we were able to change that behaviour. I just do not know whether we are doing enough to engage those men. There is no point in engaging men who do not participate in that activity. We have to engage

the men who do. People do make mistakes and they can improve, or, at least, once we have given it a go, we know exactly where they belong.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. It is a good point and we could talk about this a lot. I will just make one more comment; maybe two things. Wearing my other hat as minister for education, there are a range of programs; for example, the Clontarf program.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: My son works at Clontarf.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Excellent! I love Gerard Neesham, even though he was from the wrong footy team, but I love the work that he does. His leadership program for Indigenous boys is all about teaching Indigenous boys what it is to be a culturally appropriate Indigenous man. While Gerard Neesham's Clontarf is not funded to address family and domestic violence, teaching Indigenous boys to be strong and respectful men is also an important part of how we do it. The member made the point that it is not the men in this room who we need to be focusing on —

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Let us hope not.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Statistically, there are probably some, but it is also about calling it out, because, unfortunately, we will all know people who do participate in family and domestic violence and the tough thing is to call it out.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: Thank you, minister. Thank you for indulging me, Chair.

The CHAIR: It was a very important issue. Thank you for your concern, honourable member.

I do not think there are any more questions so I might call an early mark on this one. Are members comfortable with that?

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for your attendance today. I remind members that due to time constraints, the electronic lodgement system will not be reopened for additional questions. For witnesses, I advise that the committee will forward the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice highlighted on the transcript, as soon as possible to you after the hearing. Responses to questions on notice are due by 5.00 pm, 10 working days after receipt. Should you be unable to meet the due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met.

I ask that you promptly leave the chamber for COVID-19 cleaning between sessions. Once again, I thank you all for your attendance.

Hearing concluded at 4.26 pm
