Here's where we have got it to:

The Minister has a significant interest and has made a strong commitment to the Community in Roebourne having travelled there three times in the last 12 months to meet with Child Protection workers, Police, Local Government, the District Leadership Group and most importantly Elders and concerned members of the Community who form the Roebourne 6518 Group. This was to get a firsthand understanding of the issues that are impacting on the community, that the Aboriginal Community in Roebourne felt needed to be done to make a positive, longer term difference, to receive briefings in relation to Operation Fledermaus and once a draft was developed to gauge the support and acceptance of the West Pilbara Plan.

Whilst the primary focus has been on the welfare of the children who have been identified as victims or potential victims Operation Fledermaus has had such a broad impact that it is hard to believe that any member of the Roebourne community, adult or child, has been left untouched directly or indirectly.

This realisation was the nexus for the West Pilbara Plan, a long term response to the intergenerational issues that have enabled the offences identified in Operation Fledermaus to occur. It is a multi-agency approach and all of the government and non-government service providers involved are focussed on the welfare of the community and the safety of its children.

Information is readily shared across agencies involved in the investigations, to the extent that Department of Communities investigative staff are co-located with police at Karratha.

The smallness and closeness of the Roebourne community, the high mobility of community members, adults and children and the sheer number of offences make it impossible to guarantee that offenders and victims are not in the same place at the same time.

No system we put in place can be perfect; we can’t simply remove people from a location, from their communities or from their families. No one can give a 100% guarantee that all children in Roebourne are safe at all times, nor can anyone can give such a guarantee for any other location in WA.

The Minister has endeavoured to provide an answer to Mr Goiran’s question. The Minister continues to get regular updates from the Department of Communities to assure herself that adequate safeguards are in place for vulnerable children in Roebourne and surrounding areas. The Minister is satisfied that the Department of Communities continues to undertake the necessary actions to protect and support children and families in Roebourne.

The WA Police Force advise present police information does not have evidence of shared accommodation between victims and alleged offenders and to the Department’s knowledge there are no registered or charged offenders, in relation to Operation Fledermaus, living or having regular contact with children.

The Commissioner of Police continues to keep the Police Minister informed of any issues at Roebourne as they arise.

To the best of her knowledge and belief, Department of Communities staff engaged in Operation Fledermaus and those staff providing child protection services to the community of Roebourne are doing everything in their power to ensure that victims are safe and supported.

Steve W