

HOME SAFE PROGRAM

**936. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Community Services:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's Home Safe program, which aims to keep unaccompanied minors off the streets of Northbridge at night.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the outcome of the program's trial, including how it is keeping young people safe?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this government plans to support the continuation of this successful program?

**Ms S.E. WINTON replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Mount Lawley for the question. I wholeheartedly agree that Northbridge is no place for children at night. That is why the Cook Labor government is investing \$935 000 to continue our Home Safe initiative to June 2025. It is a really important initiative that has had great outcomes in keeping children safe in Northbridge. All members would know that Home Safe was started by our government in the summer of 2022, when we introduced this program to get unaccompanied kids off the streets of Northbridge at night and, importantly, by doing so, potentially divert them from the justice system. Home Safe provides transport for those young people to their home, a safe place or the youth at-risk facility, YouthBeat, in Northbridge. Back in February, I had the opportunity to spend a night in Northbridge. I do not get out to Northbridge much anymore! In all seriousness, I attended on that Friday night back in February to see the program at work. It was quite incredible to see the police, Communities, Mission Australia and Nyoongar Outreach Services working collaboratively to support those young kids who should not be on the streets at night in Northbridge. This announcement was a really positive step forward. Since that positive diversion program was implemented, we have seen over 800 young people engaged and taken off the streets of Northbridge. There have been nearly 3 000 interactions with young people to get them off the streets and back to a safe place and connected back home. The average age of children involved was 14 and a half, with the youngest just nine years old. Members can see how important this program is in supporting the various agencies, including police, to get young people away from Northbridge and back home and safe.

Our government is committed to giving children and young people every opportunity to be the best that they can be. In addition to supporting children and young people to get to a safe and secure place at night, the program importantly also helps to identify at-risk children and young people and ensure that they have the wraparound support that they need. It is not just about getting children out of Northbridge and putting them somewhere else. Through that process, we identify the risk for those children and we can then put wraparound services in place. Through that partnership, at-risk Aboriginal children and young people and their families receive multiagency case management and support led by Nyoongar Outreach Services, an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation. This initiative complements an extraordinarily wide range of early intervention, prevention and diversionary measures that have been implemented since we came to government in 2017 to divert at-risk young people from the criminal justice system. We know that investing in at-risk youth means that we are investing in their future and, ultimately, our community.