

CHILDREN'S COURT — LINKS PROGRAM

896. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Mental Health:

- (1) Does the minister agree with recent expert advice that between 50 per cent and 75 per cent of young people in detention have a serious mental health problem?
- (2) If the minister does not agree, what does the minister believe to be a more accurate estimate; and on what advice does the minister base this belief?
- (3) If the minister does agree with (1), what advice has the minister provided to the government about the resourcing of the Children's Court specialised mental health program, Links?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(2) I have raised this issue with the Chief Psychiatrist, and I have had a look at the information in that particular report. The Chief Psychiatrist indicated to me that because of the words that the member has used in the question, namely “serious mental health problem”, the figure she has used of between 50 per cent and 75 per cent is a bit high. For those reasons, he cautions about ascertaining that between 50 per cent and 75 per cent of young people in detention have a serious mental illness. So the member should probably go back and check that those words are not being used inappropriately.
- (3) Links is the Children's Court's program component of a 20-month pilot mental health court diversion and support program. Links aims to divert young people with mental health issues, who intersect with the justice system, into assessment and treatment. An amount of \$2.2 million has been allocated by the state government to the Links program for the pilot program. A process evaluation is currently underway and will be finalised shortly. The outcomes of this evaluation will inform consideration of future funding through the budget process.