

COERCIVE CONTROL — LEGISLATION

897. Ms L. METTAM to the Attorney General:

I refer to the Attorney General's brief ministerial statement today regarding legislative responses to coercive control in Western Australia.

- (1) Given that the report states that urgent systemic and legislative reform is required to respond to coercive control, why has it taken 18 months since consultation closed for the report findings to be released?
- (2) How long will it take for the appropriate systemic reforms and education and training to be put in place to enable the legislation to be introduced?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:

- (1)–(2) Cabinet has accepted the report of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime on coercive control. It is a new area to the law in Western Australia. It will take some time to socialise the legal profession, the police and other justice people to the pattern of behaviour of coercive control because if we look from outside a relationship, any particular act might be innocuous, as pointed out in the report. A man who catches a train to work every day might take the car one day, and it looks innocuous. If he heard the night before that his wife was planning an outing with her friends from whom he was trying to isolate her, we can see that that becomes another circumstance of coercive control.

I have cabinet's permission to move to draft legislative reforms in the restraining order area to identify coercive control as one of those areas upon which the court can find domestic violence and issue a restraining order. Over time, I think the community and the courts will become educated in coercive control and how to best deal with it in a court setting.